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MACLEAN'S

MAY 30 2005

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THE WHOLE STORY



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OTTAWA:**
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win

Paul Wells on
the humbling
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NOW, IT'S MY TURN

A controversial researcher strikes back, hard, at Maclean's and her critics

FOR ANY PHYSICIAN, the most damaging accusation is that you've killed people, as Marjan Shacham suggests I have in Maclean's ("The Oliver case revisited," May 8, 2008). This latest attempt to discredit me is based on grossly inaccurate and falsehoods, along with what Maclean's acknowledges is a "heavy reliance on unverified sources and unverifiable quotes." I'll leave to others the reasons why Shacham—who took five years to assemble

the defibrillator rate (The Drug Trial) while representing an staff at the State University of New York at Buffalo, where she is listed in "volunteer faculty"—failed to disclose her connections and biases. I also don't know why Maclean's has quoted her verbatim. For transparency for the public interest, the facts have been established through independent inquiries.

Shacham, in the Maclean's book excerpt, alleges that my defense of patients' rights and safety as discredited Sick Kids that it failed to establish treatment guidelines for sickle cell disease, leading in part to the neglect and death of Sandra Bulger, a patient with that disease. (Maclean's adds a picture of the deceased child just below my picture; in case readers miss the connection.)

These allegations are false. The existing guidelines for sickle cell disease, revised by me and other physicians five months before Shacham's death, did not alter the long-standing requirement for assessment of a hemoglobin level prior to surgery. That didn't happen in Sandra's case, but it wasn't because there weren't clear guidelines in place, as claimed. Indeed, the hospital committee approving this death-delayed sickle cell disease guidelines established since 1993, observing that these were clearly violated by the failure to obtain the crucial preoperative hemoglobin, ultimately resulted in Sandra's death.

That committee also reported that Sandra's doctor at the time was another hematologist, who had reviewed her prior



"Fortunately, the facts have been established to surgery, but failed to send a copy of a consultation letter to the surgeon, and then claimed not to have received the surgeon's letter [which, it is not disputed, was not sent to me]. This hematologist wrongly classified the emergency surgery into Sandra's death that I was involved in Shacham's death (an internet statement repeated today in the National Post, under Maclean's current editor). But as confirmed by the proceedings of the coroner, I was not informed about Sandra's admission, preparation for surgery, or post-operative deterioration—not, in fact, until I learned of her death from her community pediatrician.

Next, it is claimed that I am responsible

for the deaths of many thalassemia patients, through promotion of licensing of the drug deferasirox. They appear to want it both ways, claiming that I was scientifically discredited, but that my influence in the American FDA exceeds that of the pharmaceutical industry, which has the lobbyists for every senator on Capitol Hill. Strikingly, it is alleged that I am quoted in unquoted news, but that other, wider doctors lack opportunity to provide (allegedly competing) news to regulatory agencies. However, it is not explained why other Toronto doctors have not exercised their authority to prescribe deferasirox. (Thousands of requests for unlicensed drugs are issued, and granted quickly, by Health Canada annually, under its Emergency Drug Release program.)

Scientific evidence has not persuaded some regulatory agencies, to date, to license deferasirox. Many patients and industry-supported doctors, among other questionable sources. Recently, however, three leading proponents of deferasirox conceded in the July 2003 issue of *Neuro*, the official journal of the American Society of Hematology, that the drug causes body iron to "decrease in some patients, remain stable in others, and increase in some others"—my suspicion 10 years ago, which prompted premarket termination of clinical trials and then legal action against me.

Other errors are too numerous to address here. Since 1996, powerful forces, including certain media outlets, have tried to drive me out of medicine through malicious public attacks. Apparently, my stand for patients' rights might set a dangerous example. Despite these attempts, I have been sustained with substantial support. Since 1999, my National Institutes of Health research grants have represented 23 to 60 per cent of NIH funding to Toronto General Hospital. And every year since 2001, I have a generous free, expert care to hundreds of thalassemia patients—all surviving without deferasirox.

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Mansbridge on the Record



WINNERS AND LOSERS

'Amazing' Jack, no more 'Mr. Dithers,' and Harper's troubled leadership

SO, THE LIBERALS live to see another day. And so does their leader. Together they had been written off so many times in the past six weeks that people were already taking their demise in fact, some even joking, when the topic was raised. Everyone assumed a campaign was imminent, media organizations picked their reporting teams, the TV debates were being planned, party strategists had the first few weeks mapped out—which vines to nibble, when and for how long. The Conservatives had a period three campaign headquarters, hired staff, and were printing placards and lawn signs. Yet it didn't happen, and probably won't until at least the fall, perhaps not until the new year. True, one, I'm never wrong on these things—just don't read his much of a column.

So what are we left with: another bummer period? Parliament is still in recess, so nothing going to take serious effect on the part of all parliamentarians in creating some semblance of order. The same old clowns who spend their time sowing discord on either side of the great divide, change is unlikely to ever change. However, they have changed for the leaders.

For Paul Martin, it has been a heretical month, for an endogenous reprobate and a possible housemate—he may have, at least in part, buried the "Mr. Dithers" label. You can debate the methodology, the enterprise, even the effects, behind his survival. A short-term as it may be, but it's hard to argue that he didn't move fast when given such a last-ditch strategy on folded quickly on those main levels—by the time through a better than the Conservatives' use of parliamentary pro-

cedure, drew support for an election next year, rather than this year, during a speech to the nation and, finally, won audging away at the solidarity of the opposition. He accomplished all that.

For Stephen Harper, it's been a month of incredible highs, where he looked supremely confident and had the numbers to back up that position, and got wounding lows, where he came across as a guy who was blindsided by the Liberals or, worse, by some of his own. His initial move when the Cons entry scorched the Liberals was to be a contrast, but his own party descended a path to the polls. When he followed that advice and went for it, however, things slowly started to unravel, and he was unable to keep the flap closed as his still relatively new and shaky team. There's already a sense his leadership may be in trouble.

For Jack Layton, no flagging of an amazing run. Six weeks ago people were asking, "Where's Jack?" Now he leads the first New Democratic Party to have actually written, and then passed, at least part of a federal budget. For a party with less than seven per cent of the vote in Parliament, that's nothing to bow off as a paddling achievement.

And then there's Gilles Duceppe. Did he really care if there was an election? Probably not. After all, his reason of time to prove Canada doesn't work. These days, he probably has a lot more support on that—and not just from separatists in Quebec.

So what happens now? Could there, after a brief pause at everyone else's house, be more of the same? Yes, but if it does could change so quickly in the just few weeks, just imagine what might happen in the next few months. Aerially, I want to stop imagining for a while. I trust, how could it be any wilder than what we've just witnessed?

Peter Mansbridge is Chief Correspondent of CBC Television News and Author of *201: What Now?* To comment: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com>

FaceTime

Kylie



Her fans around the world were stunned. But through Kylie Minogue, the popular Australian teen comes to our screen, and with it, diagnosis with breast cancer. But at only 36, she is much younger than most women who contract the disease (the average age is in the early 50s).



Unlikely marriage. Michele Gosselin, 38, went on a bungee-jumping date to make a simple point: that two caregivers are not enough to look after 17 people in a long-term-care facility in modern-day Alberta. Her cause took off.



This dapper man. He was found April 7 on a beach in southern England, shaggy wet and with all the labels on his clothes removed. His only real connection was to the group of people he was with. The press called him Mr. Hollywood, but the name he uses more is "Sweat Head." He and the latest entries in our chart share the same age,

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BREAKING THE PIGGY BANK

The election-obsessed feds have authorized billions in new spending

IT ALL SOUNDS so glibly, silly: exploreable. A new windfall to cover constituents in eastern Newfoundland? First nation here's \$93,135. A commemorative centre for former prime minister R.B. Bennett in his birthplace in rural New Brunswick? However, why didn't we know? Here's \$355,886. Day after day, the feds are funnelling money into ridings, handouts of cash so-worthy hand sum or less than a month.

At the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies, a Halifax-based private think tank, researchers are tracking the flight of this bootie to see if Frost will go to government ridings, especially those won by a narrow margin. That's the way it has always been—especially since the federal Tories set up the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency in the late 1980s. "I am not saying we should never spend money on trials and tributes," says ACOA president Ivan Lee Crowley. "But, right across the country, politics is masquerading as economic development."

It's a huge sum of at least \$9 billion in raw spending since February. It has fascinated federal Finance officials, scurrying their relationship with their solid minister, Ralph Goodale. Perhaps worse of all, it has warmly pockmarked the possibility of major tax cuts for the next decade, which is just plain entry in a globalising world. And we, the hapless recipients of this largesse, did not even get to talk about. "We're going to continue to have a very high tax burden," says Toronto-Danforth MP Brian Topp. "But that is so much more compassionate out there today. Labour

"I am not saying we should never spend money on trials and tributes."

and capital mobility have heightened. Resources will just shift away and our nose?" Paul Martin used to be about balance, parsimony, restraint in spending, debt repayment and rates. Now the Tories, although they are not without parsimony themselves, have raised \$3.5 billion in Gov't money since April 28—and the meter is still ticking. Two weeks ago, in a voluntary audit, Goodale counted it was only \$9 billion over five years, because the Tories were double-counting items, including money already in the February budget or added into a weird bill okaying \$4.5 billion in extra spending for sugar-puposes over the next two years—if budget surpluses appear. (This is highly unusual; surplus found after the fiscal year ends have gone into next.)

Such spending will probably not show as into deficit again (after all), we have been paying down debt for almost a decade and cutting our once-entombed interest costs. Our economy is healthy. But these great expenditures have damped prosperity—and skewed politics. Any example tells the tale in their alarmingly brief talks with Goodale before the budget. Finance officials pushed for corporate tax cuts, arguing that large firms in most nations pay lower rates. Goodale reluctantly agreed—and the NDP pushed for their removal as part of the price of support. Now, the Grits are stretching out for big upgrades—and turning the tide again to create a cut-greedy medium-sized firm so they, at least, could get there. This is a legal nightmare.

Such depressing plots are almost routine. Invariably the Liberals have not just called a meeting of their election readiness committee. That sounds like needless neglect until you realise they already have a campaign plan: spend billions of money on every constituency. He was 38.

DIED Les Bartle, a laudable legend and the former managerial coach for the Toronto FC in the National Lacrosse League, died in his hometown of St. Catharines, Ont., of colon cancer. He was 58.

RETIRING golf great Jack Nicklaus, 65, will play his last tournament in July—the British Open at Scotland's fabled St. Andrews.

Passages

HONOURED Friends called her a hero. Squandered C. seen. Mason Barber, 27, was chaperoning a group of younger Girl Guides on a rafting trip along B.C.'s Elaho River when the raft overturned. She hung back to her mentor to let eight other girls be rescued first, and was drowned by the current.

WON Montreal wheelchair tennis champ Charaline Pothier, 36, continues to power ahead. She won two golds at the inaugural Paralympic World Cup in Manchester, England, and was later given a prestigious international award as the top competitor in the world with a disability.

WON Kaphi Goncalo, 15, of Burlington, Ont., won an outstanding achievement award at the world's biggest science fair in Phuket. And three other Canadian teens won the prize in separate categories. Char Gervais, 13, from Windsor, Ont., won in health for developing software to better screen for breast cancers. Kartik Madhava, 15, from Mississauga, Ont., won for environmental science, and Adriana Vars, 15, from Montreal, in biochemistry.

DIED He was a fine judge but probably an even better negotiator. Alan Gold, the retired former chief justice of the Quebec Superior Court, was the man called in for difficult jobs. Among other things, he mediated a stand-off in the Okanagan with Quebec Molinard in 1990. Gold died in his sleep at home in Montreal. He was 87.

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THE MACLEAN'S INTERVIEW



Interview | MICHAEL SELLERS

'I'VE BEEN SURPRISED BY THE ANGER ABOUT KARLA GETTING OUT'

"*UNTIL DEATH DO US PARTAKE*" is the last project on the line for *Dreddy*, a movie based on the crimes of Karla Homolka and Paul Bernardo. It won't be released for another four months, maybe more. And its Los Angeles-based makers have yet to find a North American distributor. But the film is already drawing fire. Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty is among those asking viewers to boycott it, arguing it exploits the death of the pair's teenage victims, Kristen French and Leslie Mahaffy. Michael Sellers, the film's co-producer, addresses the uproar.

Why have given some good reason not to see *Dreddy*. Maybe you can tell us why we should watch it.

The closer you are to the ground zero of the story, the place where those events took place, the harsher it is to create a tone to go

on it. It's not the kind of movie that's for everyone, anyway. But as you get further away, people who are aware of the case and are not emotionally connected to it might be interested in knowing more of the why and how, more of the psychological elements involved.

The movie's promotional website doesn't suggest a deep psychological explanation. It gives the sense of a thriller, or a disaster. Your impression is really off. Honest to God, that movie is the same type of movie as *Monster* [the Alison Mosshart story, for which Charlize Theron won an Oscar in 2004]. The only emotion happens off-camera, and there's an intense sort of distaste to it. You have Karla trying to tell her story to a psychiatrist eight years into her sentence, and the psychiatrist trying to peel the layers of the ocean back to force her to acknowledge aspects of it she doesn't want to address.

How do you respond to those who say you're cashing in on the misery of the victims? If we're making a concerned marketing of fun to derive income from southern Ontario, I think that argument would have some merit. My answer is that we wouldn't do so if we released the film in that area. If it becomes impossible to release there, then to be it.

Isn't fictionalising the story more nakedly exploitative than, say, covering it in zero? I've seen two or three documentaries on the case and they're infinitely more exploitative than what we've done. Their tone is one of factual rigs or tabloids. The notion that, because our movie is fiction, it's somehow less toxic is wrong.

Do you have any idea before you took on this project how truly horrific are the case?

At this has been happening, I've been trying to not only talk but also listen. I've been surprised by the anger that's out there getting out of just summer, and the emotion that's triggering. There's been a chemical reaction, if you like, between the movie, her release from prison and the sense of justice unfilled that has hyper-charged the whole situation. I don't think I quite fathomed those elements before hand.

CHARLES GILLIS

SURVIVOR: OTTAWA



BY THE NUMBERS

What do Canadians really think about the country's politicians? The latest Maclean's/Postmedia News Poll provides some intriguing answers.

Which federal party leader would most benefit from an Extreme Makeover?

Paul Martin	28%
Stephen Harper	18
Gilles Duceppe	12
Jack Layton	10
All of the above	4
None of the above	3
Don't know/refused	25

If you could take any leader to a movie premiere, whom would you pick?

Paul Martin	23%
Jack Layton	21
Stephen Harper	17
Gilles Duceppe	13
None of the above	14
Don't know/refused	13

In your opinion, which party leader would be most likely to cheat on an issue?

Paul Martin	33%
Stephen Harper	12
Gilles Duceppe	9
Jack Layton	3
All of the above	14
None of the above	4
Don't know/refused	25

SOURCE: AIR-LINE INC., MACLEAN'S/POSTMEDIA NEWS POLL

All pumped up—and with good reason following the narrowing of victories

In classic Liberal fashion, the PM avoids getting voted off the island. JOHN GEDDES reports.

PAUL MARTIN has a new political persona: classic Liberal survivor. It's not the first time he has switched identities. For years he was a vague presence on the edge of the Liberal party's collective imagination, intriguing because he possessed both a shipping company and the name of his famous politician father. Plunging into politics, he came to acquire a distinctive image—rough-hewn, jeans-clad, determinedly layer of the federal deficit. When he finally ousted Chretien, he tried to rebrand himself as realistic change agent. That one never took. Then his party was rocked by scandal; he ran an unapproved elec-

camping, and looked unsure of how to get anything done with the ministry he was left to lead. Playing a weak hand in prime minister, Martin was in danger of being read as internally indecisive and ineffectual.

But now, after his springtime scramble to stay in office, he has been viewed in yet another light. First, he cut a politically risky budget deal with the NDP. Next, he sheathed the country by wrangling into a snow con-freccie with Belinda Stronach in tow. And, finally, he won the House vote that those two

noworiously tricky-to-win down. William Lyon Mackenzie King, the quiescent modern Liberal PM, led the nation through the Second World War—but it remained mostly fit the sky, if necessary—but not necessarily, governing style. Pierre Trudeau is a hero to many as the father of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms—but Liberal insiders are as likely to remember just how he bounded back from being knocked down to a minority in 1972 and right off of office in 1979.

Martin's inexorably loyal core of aides and advisers is already aware of all that lore. Within two hours of the Liberals' winning last week's federal budget in the House on the budget—which went down to Speaker Peter Milliken calling the na-

breaking vote in the government's favour—Beau is racing Martin to his office to tell him he's now a reincarnation of Judy King or Trudeau in midlife. And if not King's caution or Trudeau's charisma that has in mind—it's the dogged determination of both to find ways not to be beaten. "The Prime Minister has been extremely toughened by the past year," Beau says. "He has learned how to make things work."

Is there really something in the federal Liberal DNA, something showing up in Martin's newfound resoluteness, that makes the party unique in its stick and grab power? If anyone has mapped the Liberal genome, it is Senator David Smith,

WITH his political skills, Martin is starting to be regarded as the true heir to his party's sunny ways of old

the party's most revered living election organizer. One of his Parliament Hill office walls is covered with telephone calls at the sides of Gutz kewpieheads from the early 1920s to the present day. The kewpies are more than memorabilia—they're a study guide. They illustrate a party alternating French and English-speaking leaders, big business figures in concert with social-polity innovators. One of a much younger French with Wilfrid Laurier, champion four decades ago of Leo Labine, prompts a mere lecture. Still others how Framson had to learn to show due respect to Gaudet's determined nationalism, a party in the sunny. Some things never change. Marlin absorbed the unaccustomed the year when he had to bow to internal party pressure and not sign to George W. Bush's peace deal plan.

The tradition of amending to an "progressive" or "sozial" wing, always wary of U.S. power, makes it the liberal party's choice. "No enemies on the left." King stressed. Smith describes a "healthy tension" between the party's left and right poles, but says the party's bedrock is "basically solidly socialist." Mamas may be a millionaire shipping magnate who established his business-friendly credentials by balancing the books at Cheshire's finance minister, but he was eager to distance himself from "commie-left" Libs and soon made becoming Prime Minister. He was doing more than shoring up the less-developed side of his image. His father, Paul Martin Sr., a cabinet minister from King's Martinon, a Thatcherite, helped create the pension socialist net, including medicaid—and few doubt Paul Sr. is emboldened by a son-in-law, even fervent, desire to live up to his father's legacy.

But it doesn't take a general influenza to nudge a wretched Liberal leftward. Author Ian Graham has written that, historically, the party has always "touched base to the left" when defeated by the Tories. Perhaps even the threat of defeat is enough. The explosion of the sponsorship scandal had far worse destabilized any prospect of Martin crossing to an easy majority in an election. And the scattered Conservatives—a factor Chretien never faced—leaving again like a wretched alternative. So Martin and his team improvised a campaign, largely avoided talking fears that Stephen Harper would undermine public healthcare and generally kick Canadiana out of existence in the short term, and relied on an emphasis on the Liberal record, calling Martin has learned to do what it takes. "I don't think the final Martin of 1993 would have even contemplated striking that deal with the Tories and the insider."

mediation, most notably in recent weeks through a series of bilateral child care agreements. Social Development Minister Karen Dryden has struck with provinces.

It looked like no great stretch then for Martin to cut a deal with New Democratic Party Leader Jack Layton. In return for NDP support in the House on the budget vote, Martin added \$4.6 billion to the budget for Layton priorities like social housing and tuition cuts. While those goals are hardly out of step with the Liberals' current bent, a Martin confidant said telling Layton to shape up could a policy blip.

poll of the Liberal elite and its promise of power. Consider the players: An anti-park home-turned politico in the quarry. A former Liberal Ontario premier, now chairman of a major Toronto law firm, flashes her out. The hunt ends over delicate seminole fields at 24 Sussex Drive with the Prime Minister, himself a millionaire former CEO born to political influence. This isn't the KDP.

And any suggestion that Stratton's ideas, or even his personal qualities, figured in the struggle is hard to sustain. Martin's tragic mirth of having discovered over dinner that he and she have a lot in common. That the fact is that the deal to give her a cabinet post was cut before their crooked late supper. Stratton's irredeemable value was the single vote she represented in the House. Her longer-term worth was any change her policies might do to Harper's outreach to moderate Ontario voters. Whether Martin ended up liking her or not seemed, at most, an afterthought.

Of course, Conservatism believed that the world-time Liberalism portrayed at its worst. Even a few Liberal purists wondered if the Stromach manoeuvre didn't look too crass. "Some Liberals can be fairly cynical about it," Swift admitted, "but if you asked them, 'Are you glad it happened?' and you handed them up to a doctor, I know what the truth would be."

He right, offense. By and large, Liberals do seem at ease with where they stand. It's the Conservatives who ended last week less sure of the ground beneath them. The new critical appraisal of Martin is that he looks willing to do anything. But the negative take on Harper is that he appears angry about everything. The nonentity, at least for the moment, old schools about Gens and Tories. That Liberals may be flippery, but they're not really scary. That Conservatives may be principled, but they're not quite likable. A long history of winning shows why Liberals are willing to live with those responses. □

DAMAGED GOODS

For Tories, there are hard lessons in the Stronach defection, says PAUL WELLS



BLIND, STRONACH'S job in Paul Martin's cabinet will last, basking cosmopolitan, for the life of this minority (least) government. Perhaps even longer if the Liberals win an election. But it took her less than three days to fulfill her function: inflict massive political damage on the Conservative party she had done so much to create, and then stand, not long enough to be noticed, on the right side of House of Commons

Speaker: Peter Millett instead of the left

mission accomplished. The rest is gravy.

Miliken voted to keep the debate going, and therefore the government

If Stomach had kept the Conservative seat she had warned, less than spectacularly, since last year's election, the bill would have been defeated and May's government would be. We would be in an election campaign by now. This is why a roisterous reporter forgot their manners and lauded our lead

on Tuesday when the PM told them the research's stunning definition had nothing to do with the learning war.

"We found that an critical questions of both policy and politics, we have much in common," Martin said at that memorable conference. And indeed, with hindsight the shock of Storch's appearance at a Sarah side has faded well, a little—and the new surprise is that Ottawa's new spotlight people took nothing no get together. Martin and Storch really do have much in common after all—both, born into the family law new, whose boundaries ambitious was so thoroughly blocked by sole theorists that each, on rare

Not quite consistent,
Ottawa's new
spotlight could still
have a lot in common

had to improve a shocking rate change. Martin left the Liberal cabinet in 2002 so he could lay siege to Jean Chrétien's job. Stéphane left the Conservative party so she could ruin Stephen Harper's week.

But that's an admittedly cynical read of the week's events—life in Ottawa these days makes cynicism hard to avoid—and it makes an important fact: judging from the responses in public opinion polls and in an analysis of persons-in-the-street interviews on the television news, Stéphane's conservatism and Martin's subversion were welcomed by many Canadians as a genuine blessing.

And there are lessons there for Harper, a lesson he can't ignore if he wants to keep his job much longer. The polling firm EKOS Research Associates was measuring Canadians' voting preferences when Stéphane made her leap to Liberal heaven. Liberal president Frank Graves found his numbers changed dramatically by Monday, the day before Stéphane's announcement, when the Liberals at 42 per cent in Ontario, 13 points over the Conservatives. Twenty-four hours later, only one respondent in three had a handle about the Stéphane-bombshell, and the Liberal lead in Ontario had grown by five points.

How to explain that? Ontarians, like that handful of reporters who laughed at the prime minister, can count. They know Stéphane's party switch had improved the Liberal's chances of surviving and spending the \$4.6 billion it now had compared with the NDC's. Jack Layton to spend some even clearly thought that was excellent news.

Two days after April 21, when Martin made his dramatic telecast plus fortune to let Justice John Gomery report on the sponsorship scandal, the political debate in the Commons has been a noisy, often squabbled test of a central question: should this government keep governing or is an increasingly impatient public it runs out a lot of Canadians want it to keep governing.

There are two obvious answers for this. First, when Martin asked for time to let Gomery finish his work, he was appealing to the common-sense proposition that decisions are best made with the facts in hand. It's not at all clear that Harper ever understood how much more that argument made to many voters. Within days of Martin's broadcast, Conservative strategists were already denouncing Martin's demand, arguing that "nobody wants to go to the election,



but sometimes you have to." The metaphor is unparallel. If you're expecting a repartee from the liberal libtrotter crew, you're going to be wary of some quick who-wants-to-drill-into-your-mandibles conservatism.

The second obvious explanation for Martin's political victory is that Canadians believe a government comes in handy.

THE silver lining in the Stéphane cloud is that, for now, Harper can stop worrying about what's going on behind his back

Harper has been stubbornly reluctant to explain in detail how a Conservative government would govern. That makes life a doozy. Canadians don't know. Many obviously prefer the Liberal deal they do know, no matter how desperate his political machinations become.

Harper's reluctance to release the Conservative

election platform before an election was a subject of heated animal debate. He finally prevailed by arguing that the Liberals would simply steal, implement and take credit for anything attractive in the program. But Conservative MPs who argue that a formal pre-election release of their platform is a crucial step in defining this new and untested party believe Stéphane's departure strengthens their hand.

James Moore, one of the longest-serving Conservative MPs and a diehard Harper lapdog, made such an argument in a mass email he sent to supporters and constituents within hours of Thursday's vote. "It is now up to Conservatives to step forward and make the case that we have the superior ideas and leadership for Canada," he wrote, "and to demonstrate the integrity and ethical standards Canadians deserve and expect from their government."

Esoteri and then done, of course. Harper insisted in aid of the task by the extraordinary loyalty of his caucus, or at least of the MPs who remain since Stéphane packed her bags.

caucus members, annoyed that she voted with them at the May 2 special committee meeting to bring down the government, then walked out and expressed reservations about the decision to wartime reparations. Two days later, in the regular meeting of the Ontario caucus, sources say she was "severely taken to task" by her colleagues.

Those colleagues remain much more gracious in their description of Stéphane than of Harper. Peter Van Loan is the MP for York South, a lawyer and former president of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. He was asked about losing Stéphane imperial Harper's leadership. "I cannot conceive of how," he said. "I cannot conceive of anybody being unhappy with him." I have "no doubt he's a party animal," Van Loan said of Harper. "But I'm pretty hard to please on these matters, and I find he has made all the right strategic and tactical decisions."

Daryl Knipp, the MP for Prince Edward-Hastings and a self-described "old-tory," said he "gained a new level of respect for Stephen Harper through the whole process." Same line from Michael Chong, the MP for Wellington-Halton Hills: "Stephen's earned the right to fight the next election, whenever that might be."

Leave aside, for the moment, the untranslatable mix of mirth in Chong's remarks. Harper's repartee may well be far from if he loses. But if his leadership between here and the autumn or winter election is uncontested, the after-living-in-the-Stéphane cloud is that the Conservative leader can stop worrying about what's going on behind his back.

That leaves him at leisure to look around and ahead. Viewed one way, the Martin-Stéphane victory was a triumph of political cynicism and backroom deal-making taken to breathtaking new heights. Viewed in another, it was a triumph for the simple idea that governments exist to do a job. Harper can do nothing about the deal-making. And it is now more evident than ever that he hasn't done enough to persuade enough Canadians that he's up to the job. Behind Stéphane, Harper gave him a few extra minutes to make that case, if he can. It was an odd gift, but then it was an odd week.

Next year may be an election
Photo by PETER MOLINA

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ROGERS
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BELINDA AND PETER THE WHOLE STORY

LIANNE GEORGE reports on a relationship that may have been doomed from the start



WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES. On Monday, May 16, Peter MacKay was oh-oh. The deputy Tory leader was poised for a long-awaited chance to topple the Liberals alongside his girlfriend and fellow caucus member Belinda Scorsich. By Tuesday, he was Harry David Thomas, romancing his wife at Walden—or, in this case, his family's sprawling farm in Lower, N.S.—to contemplate his colossal reversal of fortune. He appeared,

having lost both a wife and the girl, on the front pages of newspapers in orange rubber boots, petting his dog (one of the few things in life he can count on) and squeezing merrily into the horizon. "My heart's clear," he told the television crew camped on his lawn, but "my heart's a little hung up." It was an iconic moment, replete with over-

the-interviews-were-silently-unwatchable, seemingly a calculated move designed to frame him as a hapless victim and Scorsich as the worst kind of traitor. But there was a third, less pleasant interpretation: MacKay is a regular guy who tripped up publicly and, hell, is finding it a little embarrassing.

After all, he had his own history of trampling hearts. He was involved in a longer relationship with Lisa Merrithew—a Maritime public-relations professional and daughter of former senators—after minister Gary Mervin—whom he was rumored to have become engrossed with—Scorsich. Before that,



...as Scorsich was enthusiastically welcomed into the fold, MacKay went home to Nova Scotia to give his now-famous back-to-the-farm interview.

Even as he took up with Merrithew, he was still living with a previous long-term girlfriend, a music named Maribeth Ryan, in

'I THINK he was more upset about his public humiliation than his relationship ending,' says a former girlfriend

Ottawa. (At the time, says one insider, it was well known on the Hill that MacKay had "a bromance" in Ottawa and a band in Halifax.) In light of last week's fiasco, Ryan, now happily married with two children, puts it this way: "You know, I do feel badly for Peter, but quite fondly, as someone who knows him well. I think he was more upset about his public humiliation than his relationship ending."

THE VERY PUBLIC MacKay-Scorsich connection marked the end of what had been,

for all intents and purposes, a romance forged in the public eye as well. Despite the couple's best efforts to play it down, their relationship had a significant role in shaping the image of the new Tories as youthful, upbeat and sexy bunch. They were crowned the prince and queen of Conservative politics.

Perhaps the first sign of their ultimate incompatibility was a romantic one. Last January, when MacKay first publicly proclaimed his affection for Scorsich, then the rookie MP for Ontario's Nepean/Carling-Auditor riding,



there was something in his eye of the word "strategic" that seemed to forecast a bad ending. Who, after all, becomes a man? Charlie? 50s rock star, Audrey Hepburn in *Sabrina*, but surely not Belinda, a once-divorced mom and former CEO of a multi-billion-dollar tech company? When asked for her take on the relationship, the notoriously aloof Belinda could muster nothing more zealous than, "if late we've started strong."

That was four months ago. Last week, with less than three days to go before the crucial budget vote to determine the fate of Paul Martin's government, Belinda blundered her party—and MacKay—by crossing the floor at a newly renamed Liberal cabinet minister, the result of a covert, 12-hour deal with the PMP. On Parliament Hill, she was accused of "whoring" and "prostituting" herself—as though defeciting to Martin's camp was tantamount to political and, implicitly, personal malfeasance. Back at the farm, MacKay encountered the personnel into the political dialogue by allowing customs to sift him in the field, unarmed by his blazer as he planned portmanteau—a plaid lower setting piece in nature. "I have a lot of affection for her family, her kids in particular," he said coyly. "She did what she felt she had to do, and I wish her happiness."

Belinda maintained her silence on the subject—with the exception of one rather chilly comment: "I have a great deal of respect for Peter MacKay and the contributions he's



made to the growth of the Conservative party," she said, as though speaking of a remote school class.

ON THE SURFACE, the fallout from the Belinda-MacKay relationship is a simple case of two people having defiled an age-old principle: "Don't dig the person the company tank" (but there's more to it than that). We are, for better or worse, in an age of "scandal politics," as Liberal Senator Jim Munson

put it. "Diane Abbott Trudeau and the issue had no place in the bedrooms of the nation," he says. "Well, guess what? The issue has entered the bedrooms of the nation right now. We're all sitting on the sidelines, and like any competitive Canadian we're asking, 'How do they feel? How would we feel?'"

The rage of Steve and Belinda began markedly sometime in the fall of 2004. Belinda, now 39, was coming off a 2003 divorce from her second husband, John

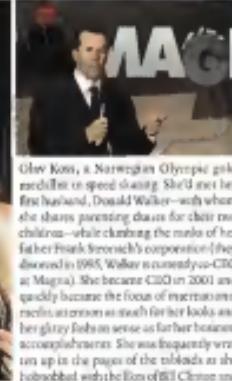


Clockwise from top, Belinda, the cousin of the now-university-of-Michigan-with-Clinton in 2002; with father Frank during the 2004 campaign; Belinda's first husband, Walker, with second husband, Kevin MacKay with their son Matthew in 2003.

state of the Ottawa Lacoste—look summer

MacKay is quite a different story: by all accounts a hearty and emotional East Coast boy. Good-looking, affable and always well dressed, the 59-year-old bachelor and rugby enthusiast from rural Nova Scotia is the son of Elmer MacKay, a long-time Tory cabinet minister and close friend of Malouine MacKay grew up in the Annapolis Valley, where he was raised by his mother, Martha. He trained as a lawyer, before winning a seat in Parliament for Pictou-Annapolis-Guysborough in 1997. In May 2003, at the age of 37, he became the leader of the Progressive Conservative party. He is a popular favorite among the party's female supporters (he has three daughters). MacKay has served as MP for seven years running. But during the 2003 Tory leadership campaign, it was then-girlfriend Manitoba who played the role of political wife, holding his hand and guiding him admirably for the cameras.

Belinda and MacKay had known each other for some time. She'd done fund-raising for him in the past, but they really became acquainted during the Tory Atlantic merger negotiations. They professed a mutual interest in winning the party, in pushing a moderate conservative agenda, and in providing a strong, malleable alternative to the Liberals. Back in Ottawa, some observers began noticing her more and more. It's clear that, although Belinda and MacKay kept their burgeoning relationship under wraps until his "surprise" cam-



Oliv Kossi, a Norwegian Olympic gold medalist in speed skating. She'd met her first husband, Donald Walker—with whom she shares parenting duties for their two children—while climbing the ranks of his father Frank's brokerage company (they divorced in 1995; Walker is now CEO of Magna). She became CEO in 2001 and quickly became the focus of the media's scrutinizing attention as much for her looks and her glitzy fish-in-sense as for her business accomplishments. She was frequently written up in the pages of the tabloids as the "Milkmaid with the looks of Bill Clinton and Jack Nicholson."

Then, in January 2004, Belinda resigned from Magna to run for the leadership of the newly united Conservative party, a merger she helped to negotiate along with Stephen Harper and MacKay. Despite support from Brian Mulroney and other Tory stalwarts, she lost that bid in March 2004, but went on to campaign for a seat in her home riding. She was, albeit by a tiny margin, and landed in Ottawa—in a

nearby January. Then the scrutiny began.

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At the East Coast Music Awards (below), in the House after the break (right); Steven and fellow Senator Terry Scott (below left); a night of her best Liberal caucus meeting

According to Steven, Edmonston-Stratton and Terry MP Lauren Jaffer recounts how he and others would invite MacKay to join them for a beer. "He'd say, 'I'd love to go with you guys but I want to spend some time with Belinda—I really have a chance to see her,'" Jaffer says. "You'd have that other." She, on the other hand, was always harder to read, he adds. "At times it seemed like maybe she wasn't as committed to the relationship because she was always keeping such a busy schedule, but I know they both tried to spend time together."

Around Ottawa, Stratton's critics charged that she was using the romance as a political tool—exploiting MacKay's party connections and experience to jockey for position for and after his leadership run. There was also concern that the relationship was causing friction between MacKay and Harper, who had previously had a sensible working arrangement. "Within the party, it was clear she was manoeuvring," says one Terry MP who preferred not to be named. "And MacKay was prepared to be supporting her."

Then came the final night of May 16. Stratton and MacKay had eaten dinner together at the table they were sharing at the Chateau Laurier. Afterwards, without revealing her destination, she dashed out for a second dinner—at 24 Sussex Drive with Moran and his actress. The meal had already been done, now over red medallions, chocolate semifreddo and sausages blancs, they

discussed the political situation and the cabinet positions waiting for her. (In some media reports, that late-night meeting was framed in a light so slender you could almost hear maniacal laughter over the clinking of crystal.) It was only upon her return after midnight that she told MacKay of her decision to leave the floor. "He spent all night trying to talk her out of it," said one senior Terry Stratton later called Harper to tell him the news, but only after MacKay had already informed him. She didn't even have "the courtesy to tell her principal secretary," said one senior Terry

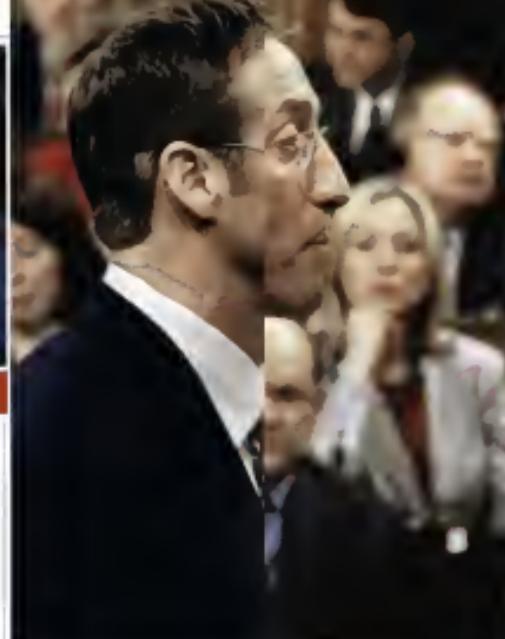
On Tuesday afternoon, news of being booted out of his Parliament Hill office besieged by media, MacKay caught a flight back home to Nova Scotia, at the suggestion of his friends and fellow MPs Gerald Kennedy and Loyola Hearn. "An afternoon in Atlantic Canada is better than a week on aünk's couch in Ottawa," says Jaffer. The next day, in her house surrounded by satellite trucks, MacKay granted the famous penthouse interview. Better to do it from, he subsequently said, than have it in a way that would seem contrived.

And then the resulting deconstruction: who wronged whom and how significantly? Stratton was immediately vilified by the media, the public and her former colleagues in the Conservative caucus, painted as a spoiled, exuberant, decadent woman of substance—a latter-day Jezebel. Harper weighed in as well. "If he has such a high opinion of

Peter MacKay," he said, "he has an awfully rough way of conveying that to him." Conservative conspiracy theorists began to surface, pointing out they'd long believed Stratton to be a Liberal plant. In one article, she was even compared to Mata Hari.

It wasn't long before the barrage of criticism sparked a defensive backlash, particularly among female Liberal MPs who accused the Times of sexism. Others countered: "I don't think you can portray the comments as anything other than coming out of a pretty deep vein of misogyny on the political right," says Sylvia Blaikie, a political science professor at the University of Toronto. Adds Patrick Conroy, a former Trudeau press secretary: "People are

surfacing. The notion that you have to stand by your man, be loyal to your man—give me a break," says one political commentator



political ally. This is one speaks more than any single term or that whole business." The breakup also helped to rehabilitate MacKay's reputation within the party. Any questions of his disloyalty to Stephen Harper were allayed. "I think now you have a huge change in the way Peter and Stephen will be able to operate," says Jaffer.

But how will MacKay's public vulnerability be viewed in the long term? "It's very Canadian, let's put it that way," says Conroy, who now runs the communication firm Media Profile Toronto. Ingratiate, he notes, there is only one circumstance in which you allow yourself to be emotionally weak in front of the cameras, and that's in the event of a tragedy, such as visiting a flood-affected area. "Showing emotion about

a failed love affair is just tacky, and I think people see it that way," Conroy says. "I think the Tories probably saw it as maybe having some impact—they're dressing, fresh."

Now, for the two former lovers, it's back to work. Stratton was warmly welcomed into the Liberal fold as a series of events. Last Thursday, MacKay was back in Ottawa at time for the confidence vote—wearing a striped suit tie that was a recent present from Stratton. "I was just one of those spontaneous gifts," he said. "Just like other spontaneous things that happened." No doubt, but in the ballad of belated Peter, collaboration—not spontaneity—was the axis around which

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The digital home: Making photographers smile

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Sharing photos used to mean lugging a bulky slide projector into the basement or littering the family room with dusty albums. But with help from today's convenient and easy-to-use technology, photographs can be stored, organized and enjoyed throughout your house at the touch of a button. It's called the digital home, and it's a place that will have you smiling even after the pictures are taken.

Shoot-and-click. Faster, simpler photography.

Having film developed can be a long and costly process. Owning a digital camera and an Entertainment PC lets you enjoy your shots as soon as you get home. Plug your digital camera into your PC and watch as your shots are added to your photo catalogue, then print or preserve your pictures on CD. An Entertainment PC can help you store and organize thousands of pictures that will never fade, making it a great way to protect memories that are still only a mouse-click away. Easy-to-use photo editing software can even make you feel like a professional photographer by helping you remove 'red eye' from your shots and adding captions, special effects and more.

Share and enjoy your photos.

Just because your photos are stored on your PC doesn't mean you have to view them on a monitor. Add a Digital Media Adapter to your TV and you can wirelessly send pictures from your Entertainment PC to its larger screen, allowing you to flip through groups of pictures with a remote control as if you were changing channels. Better still, you can use your Entertainment PC to quickly select pictures and create slideshows complete with musical soundtracks and text. Send it to your television and share a family event or vacation in pictures and song.

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photographs, and even upload your one-of-a-kind shots to a website to further protect them from harm.

Share your photos with the world.

One of the biggest benefits of digital technology is that enables you to communicate with distant friends and relatives. In the digital home, sending pictures from your Entertainment PC to the Internet is almost as simple as taking them. Virtual photo albums can be uploaded to a website – either your own or a commercial site – and can be updated automatically whenever you add or delete pictures. Online albums are a simple and convenient way to share your life with loved ones thousands of miles away.

The Digital Home in Action

Trevor and Amanda Webber decided to turn the arrival of their first child into a tribute to their own, proud parents. In the weeks prior to delivery, Amanda digitized dozens of old and often ancient family photos, organizing them on her Entertainment PC along with more recent shots. She then used her PC to create a slide show of a hundred years of family history (along with pictures of the newborn) that she could share anytime. Having a Digital Media Adapter on the TV in the living room meant that she could wirelessly play her slide show on a much larger screen. For her part, Mike uploaded the slide show to a website where it could be enjoyed by relatives overseas. For the Webbers, the digital home provided amazing new ways of protecting, sharing and enjoying more than a century of family memories.

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With digital, you don't have to pay for developing pictures, only for printing the ones you want. Then there are all the cool things you can do with digital pictures, like emailing them to friends and family, or posting them to photo-sharing sites, your own site or a blog. You can take them to the grocery store and have them made into posters the way you always did, or you can print enlargements to home, use your digital images in scrapbooking projects or upload them to online printing services that will put them on T-shirts or coffee cups.

"Your own imagination and creativity are really the only limitations now," notes Michael McAsey, director of consumer marketing at Hewlett-Packard Canada.

New Camera

People are finding continually new ways to enjoy pictures. For example, there's My Publisher, one of dozens of web-based photo services that lets you upload digital images and insert them into professionally designed page templates. The company then produces a personalized hardcover coffee-table book and mail it to you.

"They're very professionally done," says Doug Cooper, country manager for Intel. "The printing quality is excellent. And you can choose the binding you want and what goes on the cover."

Consumers are also finding that the wireless networks they installed in their homes to link computers and printers will let them view digital images on any screen in the house. Wireless media gateways transmit digital images from a computer in the home office to a TV in the family room. When a friend drops by, you can use the media gateway's remote control to quickly find and call up an image or launch a slide show, complete with fancy transition effects and music.

Mega-Memory

One reason digital photography has taken off is that the technology has seen continuous improvement since its introduction. In the past 10 to 24 months, huge advances have been made in just about every area.

Take flash memory. The first consumer digital cameras had a few megabytes of memory, often enough for only a dozen pictures. Removable flash memory cards were expensive, but since then, prices have plummeted.

A one-gigabyte card will today cost at least as \$150. That's enough capacity to hold over 400 best-quality shots taken on a mid-range five-megapixel camera. Bigger capacities are coming. Four-gigabyte cards are expected by year-end.



HP PhotoSmart 270 Compact Photo Printer
Weighing less than 1.5 lbs., prints the equivalent of 100 4x6 in. prints from a memory card.



Canon Digital Elph 950IS
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HP PhotoSmart R1130
The PhotoSmart R1130 uses HP ImageStitching Technology that takes up to seven photographs, but actually prints one picture. This 2.2-megapixel camera allows you to create one big, panoramic print and print photo editing tools, all at one time.

The number of pixels (picture elements) in a digital camera's electronic sensor is one factor that determines how much detail a camera can capture as well as how sharp and clear pictures will appear, especially when enlarged. A few years ago, three-megapixel cameras were considered leading-edge. Today, the entry-level for dedicated digital cameras is more like four megapixels, no doubt soon to be five. High-end consumer models have eight-megapixel sensors, and Casio recently introduced a 16.7-megapixel camera, although it's a professional model that sells for \$10,000.

Professionals have led the way in adopting digital gear from the start, with technology developed for them trickling down to consumers. The result is that the last consumer holdouts—serious photo hobbyists—see nothing to abandon their beloved 35-mm SLR (single-lens reflex) cameras.

So how many megapixels do you need? It depends on what you want to do. For web surfing and blogging, a four-megapixel model may be fine. But by opting for five megapixels, you can print magazine-quality eight-by-10-inch shots, according to John Chalifour, general manager, advertising and corporate communications, Sony of Canada Ltd.

"With an eight-megapixel camera, you can output the same level of quality at poster-sized prints," he says.

SLR

Now that sub-\$1,500 digital SLR's like Canon's Digital Rebel EOS and Nikon's D70 are on the market, hobbyists are finally joining the digital revolution. In fact, by the end of last year, digital SLRs were outselling 35-mm SLRs two-to-one.

There may be some diehards, notes Neil Stephenson, manager of the technical marketing group at Canon Canada. But, if their resistance is based on quality, they're just unaware of what's being produced by today's six- and eight-megapixel digital SLRs, he explains. "It's phenomenal. The quality issue is off the table."

Cameras | Point & Shoot

Today's digital cameras are also faster than older products. With earlier models, there was a noticeable pause between the time you pressed the shutter button and the camera took the picture. They also didn't turn on right away when you flicked the On/Off switch. Consumers complained of missing shots. Newer high-end cameras power up almost instantly and shutter lag is down almost to the level of mechanical film cameras.



HP PhotoSmart 940 Digital Camera
The PhotoSmart 940 digital camera features a 5-megapixel sensor and 3x optical zoom, plus the ability to record video and take panoramic shots.



Canon Digital Rebel 300D
The 3.0-megapixel EOS 300D digital SLR camera features a 3x optical zoom, image stabilization, and a 2.5-inch LCD screen.



Nikon D70
The D70 is a 2.2-megapixel digital SLR camera. It includes the image quality of a professional 35-mm SLR, but in a compact, easy-to-use, 1.5-lb. camera. It is an enhancement to further push the megapixel capture trend in professional cameras.

"Achievability exceeds what you get at a photo lab now," says HP's McAvoy. "The prints from some of our products (are rated to) last up to 215 years. That's two to three times longer than traditional prints. These things are certainly not finding in six months the way they were a couple of years ago, and that's very important to photographers."

Manufacturers admit that, in the past, consumers have resisted home printing, believing it to be too difficult or expensive. Direct-from-camera printing and card slots in printers have resolved ease-of-use issues. McAvoy notes that the cost per four-by-six-inch print from inkjet photo printers is coming down, in some cases to about 36 cents. And HP will have new printers and ink and paper bundles later this year that reduce the cost even further.

Canon's Strophman agrees. "The message on home printing is getting through," he says. "More consumers are 'digital,' and they're becoming more aware of what they can do with them. Many are finding that printing is less expensive than they thought."

Double Duty

Today's consumers also benefit from manufacturers who bring a new level of quality to digital camera-camera combos.

"People shopping for two-in-one cameras should pay attention to the quality of the video they're getting," says De Shabot, marketing manager, video cameras, VCs and DVDs, at JVC Canada. "Our Everio digital cameras allow users to capture one hour of DVD-quality MPEG2 video or up to 9,999 digital stills on a hard drive about the size of a matchbook."

They're ideal for vacation, when you want to capture high-quality stills and footage, but don't want the hassle of carrying two cameras," he points out. "Convenience and portability are musts for busy families."

Sony's Chalmon agrees. Our research shows that the majority of family photos are taken by mom, he says. "They want a two-in-one that's lightweight and easy to use."

Sony's DSCML Cyber-Shot 5.1-megapixel digital camera-camera weighs a mere 190 grams and sports a sleek design. Chalmon describes it as "James Bond-like." Women like compact size, but its styling appeals equally well to men.

Even today's single-purpose still cameras, like the eight-megapixel Canon Digital Rebel XT SLR, as well as less expensive point-and-shoot models, are remarkable for their light weights and compact sizes.

Get Snapping!

The constant improvement in digital technology won't let up. Advances in professional cameras will continue to carry up in future consumer models. Look for digital cameras to go wireless soon, too; in fact, the first models with built-in Wi-Fi networking are already on the market.

That said, tomorrow's advances shouldn't keep you from enjoying the benefits of today's technology. The face of photography may be constantly changing, but don't let that stop you from enjoying what's available right now. ■



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Sony Cyber-shot M5000

The eight-megapixel Sony Cyber-shot M5000 weekly takes large, brilliant resolution grayscale and movie photos that can last up to 100 years without fading. Prints from your print professional can fit prints up to 10" wide with ease and speed.

Cyber-shot



The slimmest 5.1-megapixel Digital Camera

Cyber-shot digital camera ADVANTAGES

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- Real Imaging Processor increases the accuracy level of your digital images for a smoother dynamic range, increased speed and STAMM™ battery life
- Only 1.5 seconds from camera start-up for the first shot
- 2.5-inch hybrid Clear Photo LCD monitor with 10x hybrid brightness for improved viewing even in direct sunlight
- Carl Zeiss® "Vario-Tessar" focused path lens system with 3x Optical Zoom

This lightweight, 9.8mm Cyber-shot camera is Sony's slimmest model yet. T7 fits comfortably into a jacket pocket, small purse or a business card holder. T7 goes wherever you go – it's always ready when there's an opportunity to shoot photos at a trade show, business meeting or a field call. T7 has improved noise reduction, automatic ISO settings, focus and image stability along with a more powerful flash. T7's 2.5-inch Clear Photo LCD is 2.8x larger than a conventional 1.5-inch LCD. The Clear Photo LCD delivers incredible resolution, brightness and contrast making it ideal for shooting and reviewing your photos – share your shots immediately after you take them, even during a business trip. When you take them back to the office, you can share this valuable information with business colleagues on the Clear Photo LCD, email them to business contacts or incorporate the shots into presentations. T7 Cyber-shot camera complements your business lifestyle and communication.



Actual size of 9.8mm



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VICTORY WITH A SPANKING

British Columbians tell their premier to listen up

“THINGS ARE GOING TO BE very different in the legislature,” promised newly minted Opposition Leader Carole James last Tuesday, in what was more of a resurrection speech than an election-night concession. British Columbia’s New Democrats, left with just two seats four years ago, stormed back in last week’s election with 34 MLAs, pending a few recounts—not a bad night’s work for a rotted leader of a once-discredited party. In a

province not noted for political subtlety, the election result was an artful settling of accounts. Voters had a spark on Premier Gordon Campbell before resounding him and about 44 inferior tubs with a well-timed, well-timed spanking, and a message playmeas. As well, a reformers proposal to implement a much-needed new system of proportional representation, known as the Single Transferable Vote, just missed the required threshold of 60 per cent approval. Don’t write off the minority yet, STV—which would demand the grip of major parties while giving voice to a wide range of independent voices—seems 57 per cent support across the province. The profound dissatisfaction with winner-take-all elected politics is a message the Liberals

and other governments ignore at their peril. Why B.C.’s economy running hot, and a return to balanced budgets, they was little appetite for letting the NDP at the province’s financial after their 10-year record of sales-tax rule. Voters were content to buy Campbell’s optimistic vision of a “Golden Decade” of prosperity, capped by the 2010 Winter Olympics. But polls showed his baseline agenda earned a grime. Crowded hospitals, soaring university tuition, government cuts and controversial privatization initiatives alienated voters in rural and NDP enclave the Vancouver island. So did the Liberal’s high-handed conduct in the legislature. With 77 of 99 seats at the start of their last term, what passed for debate



was often an orgy of self-congratulation.

The price the Liberals paid was more than 30 seats and several cabinet ministers—which explained the subdued victory of election night in Vancouver’s convention centre. They did add a noteworthy talent: Willy Oppal, an outspoken former B.C. Court of Appeal judge and prominent Indo-Canadian, is a near certainty to be the next attorney general. Another cabinet slot is in Carole Taylor, a superbly connected television journalist, or Vancouver councillor and, most recently, chairwoman of the CBC. Neither will be easily cowed by a leader used to running the show from his office. Taylor was off-camera within hours. While Campbell initially read the results at a glowing endorsement of his last mandate, Taylor had a different take. People take “egregious tides,” not an inbalanced legislature, she said. “It’s the only way you get good decision-making, accountability and people really listening to constituents.”

The narrower than expected win can’t derive from an election that, as clichéd as it sounds, history shows was the first senior government in Canada to go to the polls on a fixed election date, a day the legislature approved almost four years ago. In legislating regular elections every four years, Campbell surrendered the governing advantage of calling a vote at the most advantageous time. Campbell is only the fifth premier in the province’s history to decide his day to vote not stick-to-it-deadlines. Also, give Campbell credit for initiating the citizens’ assembly that ended the electoral reform plan, and for the unprecedented referendum that resulted.

Campbell won’t say how he rated an electoral reform referendum, which the election over, admits he voted against STV. They conclude, though, that he has a strong desire for a better system of representation, which will have to be opened. Will the legislature instead be a different place? The voters have served notice—it had better be.



THE TRUTH ABOUT POWER

The Desmarais connection to the oil-for-food scandal is mostly fiction

CONSPIRACY THEORIES always make a sort of natural sense. That’s what makes them so alluring. If you just squint a little and apply a touch of imagination, perhaps make a tiny logical leap here and there, you’ve got yourself a heck of a story. The best such theories confirm your darkest suspicions, support your lame biases and make you feel like you’ve cracked a mysterious secret. The trouble is, once you open your eyes wide and force yourself to answer those relentless questions of logic, you see that most

conspiracy theories are a load of rubbish.

Which brings us to the recent rumblings about a so-called “Canadian connection” to the United Nations oil-for-food scandal. My colleague Jonathan Gatchell and I dug into the various investigations into the oil-for-food program recently, looking for evidence to confirm rumors that several prominent Canadians, including Montreal’s powerful Desmarais family, were involved in the mess. What we found says more about the people slinging mud than it does about those who’ve seen their reputations come under attack.

Allow me to explain, for the benefit of those who do not hang on every word that Fox News broadcasts, and don’t turn to right wing blogs for their bedhead reading.

The oil-for-food program was put in 1996 to alleviate the miserable conditions that Iraq was living in the wake of the first Gulf War. Under the program, the country was allowed to export oil and used it to foreign oil companies, who made a profit from refining and reselling it to their clients. Iraq’s proceeds were deposited into UN-administered bank accounts, from which Saddam Hussein’s regime could withdraw money to pay for food, medicine and other humanitarian aid.

Almost from the start, the program was rife with corruption. Hussein used oil sales of oil to friends and political allies, which they could then sell in foreign companies for a tidy profit. There is also a suggestion of evidence showing Iraq vastly overpaid for many of the supplies it bought from abroad, as oil kickbacks from suppliers allegedly flowed back to Saddam and his buddies. Within a couple of years of the

one of the key suspects in the kickback scandal, once worked for Power Corp. So did former and current prime ministers Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin. And Paul Volcker, the man leading the UN’s investigation into the scandal, once sat on an international advisory committee for Power.

But: Are you seeing a pattern yet? The conspiracy-theorist mentality: It’s just the kind of labyrinthine web of corruption that could form the backbone of a John le Carré novel. And just like a good novel, it’s mostly fiction.

Power Corp. doesn’t control UNP Partners, and it never has. Power used to own a small stake in Parchas, which it sold in 1998. That bank was subsequently taken over by ENP, which already had the UN contract, in 1999. Shortly after the ENP takeover, Paul Desmarais stepped down from the company’s board. As for Total, the company ended operations in Iraq in the early 1970s and never returned. Between 1991 and 1997, Total attempted to negotiate a deal to develop some of Iraq’s oil fields, in accordance with UN sanctions, but no agreement was reached and the talks were ultimately abandoned.

Moreover, Strong, the left Power (it left Power in 1996, three years before Desmarais bought control of the company) Analyst, Paul Volcker did once sit on one of Power’s advisory boards, but that doesn’t much matter because, as you can clearly see by now, Power Corp. has nothing to do with the scandal at the UN, except in the mind of conspiracy theorists who’d rather connect random dots than look at the facts.

POWER CORP. has nothing to do with the scandal at the UN, except in the mind of conspiracy theorists who’d rather connect random dots than look at the facts

Well, according to the theory floating in certain circles of media, the Desmarais family’s holding company, Power Corp., was a key beneficiary of the whole affair. Power, you see, was supposedly a key shareholder of ENP Partners, the bank that held all those UN-administered accounts and then collected huge management fees while supposedly running a blind eye to the corruption. Furthermore, Total is a major shareholder of Eni S.p.A., a French oil company said to be heavily involved in the Iraqi oil business.

But wait, Maurice Strong, a well-connected Canadian UN official with links to

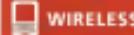
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Health | BY DARYL HIRSHLEIFER

THE NEW FACE OF HIV

Increasingly, the disease is striking young straight women having unprotected sex

KAITLIN MORRISON LOST her virginity at 13 and, she says, "it was downhill from there." At 14, she left her parents' home in Port McNall, B.C., on the northeast coast of Vancouver Island. She was a "party girl" and a "real rebel," she says, heavy into drugs (over needles, though). Now 23, Morrison recalls how raccoons ate cocaine and ecstasy could blur her judgment, as the cocaine's always safe. After fleeing an abusive relationship in Calgary, at 19 she returned to Vancouver Island, settling in Port Hardy. She was HIV-free, she had

herself tested. Then she met "some, clean-up guy" with a good job. They had casual sex. He didn't always wear a condom. "Three days after my 20th birthday," recalls Morrison, "I was diagnosed."

As Ottawa works to develop a new strategy against AIDS, far too many Canadians still think HIV is the bane of gay men and injection drug users. But the reality is much different, says Barbara Clew, executive director of the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health in Halifax. Atlantic programs from the early 1990s have actually decreased infection rates among gay and addicts. In contrast, HIV spread by heterosexual contact has risen sharply in Canada, jumping from 11 per cent of new adult cases before 1998 to 33 per cent in 2003.

Part of that new reality is that women—young women in particular—now represent 25 per cent of all new HIV patients, says Clew. That's double the rate from the period before 1993. And roughly two-thirds of those women contracted the virus through unprotected sex with a man.

In a sense, Canada's experience—already in a much similar way—mirrors that of sub-Saharan Africa, where the disease started off killing men but is now devastating the female population. Today, a startling 57 per cent of adults in sub-Saharan Africa living with HIV or AIDS is female—that's 13.1 million women. In Canada, of about 250,000 people who have tested positive for HIV so far, 14 per cent, or nearly



Morrison was diagnosed with HIV just after turning 20.

6,000, are adult females. But the trend for young, straight women has risen dramatically before 1994. Canadian females 15 to 29 represented 9.8 per cent of all AIDS diagnoses in their age group; in 2003 the proportion was 41 per cent.

ONCE the bane of gay men and addicts, HIV infection from straight sex now accounts for a third of all new cases

Activists like Clew argue the pattern is evident Ottawa has already moved too long to come up with an AIDS strategy that can get young women for help. The Public Health Agency of Canada is updating its HIV/AIDS strategy. The release date has been pushed back to sometime this summer, and the agency won't say whether its plan will take direct steps to try to curb the spread of HIV in families.

Part of Clew's strategy doesn't bode well. In December, Ottawa pledged \$1.15 million in funding to help young African and other women from the disease. But changing priorities on the home front have left some groups here frustrated. Connie McCormick, executive director of Kali Shaw AIDS Services in Winnipeg, recalls that, in 1999, Ottawa gave \$12,000 to her support group for HIV-positive women. At the time, they had 13 patients. The annual funding climbed to \$135,000 in 2000, but it hasn't budged since, even though the facility now serves 85 women. (Only 10 per cent of the clients are Aboriginal, a group disproportionately burdened by the disease.) Instead of addressing the problem, says McCormick, Ottawa is cutting her grant by 11 per cent next year. Her reaction? "I don't think you can print that kind of language."

Poverty, ignorance and social pressure all contribute to the problem that is AIDS. And, despite the warning, too many young women continue to have sex without condoms. Moreover, young women like Morrison have all too quickly become the new face of this deadly disease. Today, the works for AIDS Vancouver Island, running a needle exchange program and sharing her experiences with teens. She is surprised by how many kids still think HIV/AIDS can be cured. "It makes me sick," says Morrison. "A lack of knowledge is exactly what's going to end this epidemic." That, and ignoring the fact that young heterosexual women are increasingly at risk. ■

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THE STAR TREK CONNECTION

A surprising number of child sex abusers appear to be Trekkies. Trying to figure out what that means, however, shows how little we really know about pedophiles, writes JONATHON GATEHOUSE.

THE FIRST THING detectives from the Toronto police sex crimes unit saw when they entered Roberta Cowan's apartment was an autographed picture of William Shatner. Along with the photo on the computer of Scott Fischler, also banned for possessing child porn, they found a snapshot of the padrone's name and Boy Scout leader wearing a dress "Pedestrian" uniform. Another suspect had a TV remote control shaped like a phaser. Yet another had a Star Trek credit card in his wallet. One was using "Picard" as

his screen name. In the 30 years since police in Canada's biggest city established a special unit to tackle child pornography, investigators have been through so many dwellings packed with sci-fi books, DVDs, toys and collectibles like Klingon swords and shields that it's become a dark sidebar joke. "We always say there are two types of pedophiles: Star Trek and Star Wars," says Det. Ian Lamond, the unit's second-in-command. "Star Trek's mostly star Trek."

It's the type of oddball coincidence that's difficult to ignore. Even more so when you realize there's virtually nothing else, beyond their shared perversion, that links the new generation of child sex offenders. When the Toronto squad—which drew international attention to its work for its successful efforts to identify young stars, the so-called Disney World Girl—first started, investigators could draw a profile of the typical baddie. It was the common stereotype of the molester and collector: an older white male, living alone or with his aging parents, often in squalid conditions. "A lair in a basement wearing track pants," says Lamond.

But as child pornography has exploded on the Internet, and the number of suspects under investigation has mushroomed, that pattern has changed. The detective points to a white marker board on the wall of the squad's downtown office that lists the names

upon them. When it comes to pedophiles, there's more myth and anecdote than hard data. And after more than 100 years of study, the task of separating the science from the fiction has only just begun.

THE CORNER SUITE on the fourth floor of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health affords a discreet view of the University of Toronto campus, but the patient never gets to see it. Inside the laboratory's thick curtains of darkness, from the comfort of a brown vinyl recliner, the man is instead faced with three large white screens. Side projectors flash medical textbook-style photos of nude men, women and children in carefully timed sequence while the test subject listens to erotic stories via headphones. A pressure cuff and transducers measure even the most minute changes in blood flow to the penis. Established in the late 1960s, based on technology developed in Czechoslovakia a decade before, the CAMH lab and others like it remain the best-established laboratory method to scientifically determine if someone has a sexual preference for children. It is far from foolproof. In tests of men who have three convictions for molestation but deny any attraction to children, the misclassification rate is 10 per cent accurate. In about five per cent of cases it gives a false positive.

Still, doctors find the lab useful in helping them determine evidence for more easily. The CAMH, a world authority on child sex offenders, screens about nine men a week, most of them parolees or on probation. In thousands of tests over the past decades, what its researchers, and others in the field, have discovered is that only about half of the men who sexually abuse kids have an actual sexual preference for them. The remaining 50 per cent of molesters have some normal, adult-oriented family members, are not the result of a deranged preference, but rather a tragic lapse of judgment, frequently abetted by drugs or alcohol. They can be punished by the courts, doctors can help them deal with their addictions, but there is no sure fix for bad choices.

Ray Blanchard, the institute's head of clinical sexology services, has long been looking for clues to what makes molesters tick. Drawing on decades of case files (including the work of Kurt Freund, the



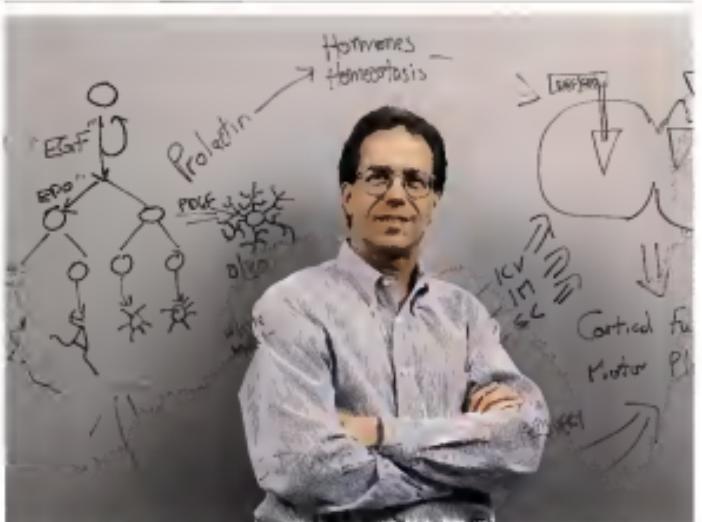
passing Czech psychiatrist who set up the lab when he immigrated to Canada following the 1968 Soviet invasion), he and his colleagues have uncovered some surprising patterns among molesters. Men with a sexual preference for children are more likely to have suffered head injuries when they themselves were young. As a group, they have slightly lower IQs than the general population—90 on average, versus the societal norm of 100—and score lower on memory tests. And they are three times more likely to be left-handed. About 30 per cent of pedophiles are left-handed, versus eight to 12 per cent of the rest of the male population. The higher rate of left-

handedness is important because it strongly suggests that pedophiles may have more to do with nature than nurture. Different in intelligence could be explained by the simple notion that the smarter pedophiles are less likely to be caught. Men's higher rate of left-handedness—which develops in utero and has already been associated with a variety of neurological problems including Down's syndrome, epilepsy, autism and dyslexia—hints that their brains may be structured differently.

Blanchard and his colleagues have only just begun to look for the specific differences with MRI scans. And they don't have a ready explanation for why pedophiles'

brain might have changed in the womb—whether it's a matter of genetics, biological toxins, or some outside factor like tobacco or alcohol use. He compares the situation to Plan's parable of the cave—where beyond ignorance is facing a wall, a fire behind them, able only to guess at what is happening around them. "That's the best information we have, and at this point we're just sitting in the cave looking at the shadows."

IT WAS THE German psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing who first attached the label pedophile to men who are sexually attracted to children. His landmark 1886 study of perversion, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, remains the



STEM CELL CENTRAL

Canada is in the vanguard as innovative therapies get set to leap from the lab

PETER SAUER FELT his life slipping away. In 1994, diagnosed Sauer, then 39, with Parkinson's disease, a cruel brain disorder that progressively robs sufferers of the ability to move or function normally. Sauer responded to his job as a parts manager with Bell Canada in Ottawa and returned to Prince Edward Island where, cut off, he had formed for over two decades "I come back to build a house on land I still owned," says Sauer. "My neighbors thought I was building myself a coffin."

Small wonder: as the disease took hold, Sauer's body shut down. His hands trembled

uncontrollably. He walked like a hunched shuffle. He could no longer feed or dress himself. "I've always been terribly scared of being shamed off to a corner somewhere," he says. "That's where I was headed."

Sauer came in the flow of a pioneering cell transplant program overseen by Iván Mendieta, head of neurosurgery at

Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre in Halifax. Starting in 2000, Mendieta began transplanting brain cells from fetal tissue into the brains of 30 Parkinson's patients who hadn't responded to other therapies. He was trying to replace the dopamine-producing cells,

which spark connections in the brain, that the disease destroys. Within months, all patients showed dramatic improvements. In Sauer's case, his tremors nearly disappeared and he became independent enough to drive his car and take part in necessary events, including an all-right barbecue party in February. "I've been given," says Sauer, now 70, "a new lease on life."

Mendieta and his team realized that the transplant results, though groundbreaking, represented only one piece of a puzzle. Still to be overcome: finding enough specific fetal cells to turn such operations into a routine procedure for the 100,000

patients in trying to cure Parkinson's disease to help stroke victims

or 200,000 Canadians suffering from the disease. What Mendieta needed were cells that could be cultured and cultivated in vast numbers, then transplanted into the human brain to perform a specific task. What he needed were the wonder agents known as stem cells.

Mendieta is now leading a national research project aimed at developing stem cells from adult skin, bone marrow and bone, and extracting them onto a microscale what the fetal brain cells did for a hedgehog. The production process has been tested. University of Calgary engineer Lee Belach has developed a bioreactor for growing human neural stem cells—the cells "We can and have a million cells," says Mendieta, "and, four weeks later, we get 300 million cells." If the stem cells can be coaxed into becoming dopamine-producing cells, and steady progress is being made on that front—they'll be injected into the brain using instruments developed and patented in Halifax for the original 30 Parkinson's patients.

A handful of similar high-end research is underway in the United States and Britain. But Canada's efforts may be more focused in that Ottawa is using its funding clout to help link the work of 80 leading scientists in information-sharing, cross-city teams, something it calls the Stem Cell Network. The potential benefit: beyond for a single disease, "I envision a time," says Mendieta, "when, if you suffer a traumatic brain or spinal cord injury, you'll be rushed to the emergency room and there will be cells on hand which can be injected into the brain to repair you. It would be a routine thing."

A routine attitude is more like it. While Mendieta's ER scenario is likely years—decades—away, other breakthroughs are much closer at hand. Stem-cell research projects around the world look to move more human trials within two to five years, if not sooner. Among other things, scientists are exploring the seemingly limitless potential of stem cells to repair damaged lenses, spinal cords and hearts, as well as to treat a host of debilitating conditions such as diabetes, blood disorders and Alzheimer's.

For this you can thank two Canadians: Alberta born biophysicist James Tait and Toronto physician Ernest McCulloch, who first discovered the existence of stem cells in the 1960s while doing Cold War research on radiation. They seem to have started a big-bell-ringing. In 2002, the journal *Nature Biotechnology* identified 35 of the most sig-

nificant stem cell research papers published in the last half of the 20th century. Canadians wrote about half of them. "When it comes to stem cells, Canada is powerhouse," says Alan Barnard, president of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, a federal funding agency, and a distinguished stem cell researcher in his own right. "There's some beautiful science going on here."

VOTE FOR STEM CELL RESEARCH IN HONOR OF 'SUPERMAN'

Kerry Edwards
A STRONGER AMERICA

While the U.S. continues to debate morality, Canada is doing some beautiful science

unwanted eggs to advance research and life-debilitating disease is both logical and ethical.

Canadian Assisted Human Reproduction Act, passed in 2001, allows researchers to use IVF embryos as long as it promises a clear benefit for human health. (The act outlaws the creation of embryos solely for research and therapeutic cloning. For one reason, though the latter is allowed in places like Mexico and South Korea. And scientists in both countries just announced they had cloned human cells for research.) Still, the ongoing controversy obscures one key fact: embryonic stem cells are the most powerful of human's building blocks: created in the first days after conception, they can develop into any biological cell. As the controversy rages, researchers are looking to adult stem cells and other somatic cell precursors, sometimes dormant, in the muscle body and brain—to get the job done. This skirts the ethical concern over embryo. It's also where Canada stands out in front of the pack.

IT'S A SLIGHT exaggeration, perhaps, to call Sana Weiss the stem cell whisperer. But when the University of Calgary neuroscientist describes her research to熟 the range of scientists, she's not sure what it sounds like. Working with rats, Weiss is trying to see if stem cells that reside in the brain, and which helped form the organ in the first place, can be coaxed into replacing the cells that are killed when a stroke occurs. (The death of this grey matter is what permanently robs stroke victims of, of course, in the U.S. in particular, stem cell research is a hot-button issue that has reached right to the heart of presidential campaigns. Critics argue that because any human embryo has the potential to be

RESCUED by
an experimental cell
transplant, Parkinson's
sufferer Sauer says,
"I have my life back"

a living being, destroying one in the name of science is morally wrong. Proponents counter that since excess embryos are more easily discarded by in vitro fertilization programs—women undergoing IVF often have as many as eight extra eggs to choose from—harvesting the stem cells from

them is ethically sound. It was a finding that defied conventional wisdom, made the cover of the prestigious journal *Science*, and garnered headlines in nearly every major newspaper around the world. Now, Weiss is on the cusp of another breakthrough. Research shows that, after a stroke, some adult stem cells automatically head toward the site of the injury, though not in nearly enough numbers to repair the damage. By injecting the site, though, with growth factors—naturally occurring proteins produced by the body to promote new tissue—Weiss' team has found that it can

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The results are remarkable. In some cases, stroke-affected areas regained the use of damaged brain. Within two weeks, they were able, eight months out of 12, to use wheelchair-bound patients like the stroke to reach out and grasp a pen or a pencil. Feeding oneself is a simple task but one that human stroke victims have enormous difficulty doing.

Watch this: back-to-back success of Ottawa heart surgeon Lynn Maguire. Three years ago, Maguire and biologist Michael Bahnik identified a group of cells in adult ovaries that look like stem cells. That discovery, too, was an unanticipated bonus. Now, Maguire leads a project aimed at having these heart cells enter a pregnant woman's body and perform a specific life-saving function: replacing the cardiac muscle destroyed by heart attack.

Few organs are as unforgiving as the heart. Damage to the heart muscle, denied oxygen by the blood because of a blockage in an artery, does not regenerate or repair itself effectively. But Maguire and his team are showing that the tiny, protein-injected stem cells from a heart attack can help expand in number to replace dying muscle cells and reduce the use of the "scarred," or area of damage, by up to 40 per cent.

The cells Maguire is working with are not, strictly speaking, stem cells. They don't have the ability to turn themselves into a variety of cell types. But they will transform into heart muscle cells—or, in animals (Maguire figures human trials are three to five years away). At the same time, he is collaborating with University of Calgary biologist Jay Cross, who is trying to identify the factors that turn early embryonic stem cells in mice into heart muscle. Poking the human equivalent would open up the door to creating human heart muscle in the lab before injecting it back into a heart attack victim. "At this stage," says Maguire, "you can't take one grown out over another."

DIABETES is another chronic disease benefiting from this kind of research. In 1998, University of Alberta researchers developed the so-called Edmonton Protocol in which patients suffering from Type 1 or juvenile diabetes are injected with insulin-secreting

cells, known as islets, from donated human pancreases. During the first year following the procedure, 80 per cent of patients no longer need daily insulin shots and are freed from the wait. Blood sugar swings that threaten their lives, like the tides from ocean to ocean, with tides.

Another innovation: two pancreases are needed from donated cadavers to harvest enough islets for one transplant. Lawrence Rosenberg, a professor of medicine at McGill University, is leading a research project aimed at developing a limitless supply of insulin-producing tissue. This would also help people with Type 1 diabetes—the vast majority of those with the disease.

Rosenberg's team has identified two populations of cells in the adult human pancreas that can be manipulated into insulin-producing cells. Within 38 months he hopes to begin transforming these cells into islets to see if they will function as real ones. If that is successful, it is on to human trials.

At Toronto's Wyndham Hospital, stem cells are being harvested from the spinal cords of organ donors, one of only a small handful of such programs in the world. Led by neurosurgeon Charles Tator, the team has found that, in rats, transplanted stem cells can be kept alive for weeks and mature into adult-like spinal cord cells. The challenge is to see if they can repeat repairs to the spinal cords of human patients. Tator has collected nine human spinal cord specimens to lay the groundwork for eventual human trials. Implanting stem cells is one of about 15 new strategies currently in play for treating damaged spinal cords, a condition that afflicts some 30,000 Canadians. One includes drugs to help nerve cells sprout new connections; another involves transplanting olfactory ensheathing cells from the nose (which have a stem cell component) into the injured area—a procedure being performed in China on a highly experimental basis.

Tator is part of a group of North American researchers trying to determine which sprout a heart or take to human trials first, assuming the trials could happen within two years. "It's unbelievably how much we've learned about the injured nervous system and how to repair it," he says. "We're very close to taking it to the next step."

Television | BY SHARON DEZIEL

FAIRY-DUSTED VOWS

Same-sex marriage gets its own prime-time slot, but not without some flak

SCOTT THOMPSON is confused. "I got away with things 15 years ago on TV that you wouldn't let me do now—fornicating with men in the beginning of *Will & Grace* and no one noticed." But back then Thompson was on a comedy show for "women and one twenty-four" using her straight on a public broadcast. He now gig is hosting *My Fabulous Gay Wedding*, a prime-time reality show on a major network (Global, June 1) aimed at mainstream Canadian families—and dealing with one of the country's most hotly debated topics. "It's been a bumpy ride," Thompson says about bringing same-sex marriage and his son, ready-for-prime-time personality to Global. "There's an awful lot of pressure on the show and a lot of people second-guessing it. People are very frightened of gay marriage." In fact, the conservative group Canada Family Action Coalition has called for a boycott of Canadian Tim, which features an episode of the series, claiming that "show like this are breaking down the moral fibre of society."

Thompson is ready to ruffle feathers and confront stereotypes head on. So, in the series, he plays a fairy-tale who gets the wedding wishes of an same-sex couple by having fairy-tales in pull off the event in just two weeks. Episodes at Global and at Logo, the U.S. partner, were nominee. "They said, 'Why are you calling yourself a fairy? That's offensive,'" recalls Thompson. "But I can't tell myself whatever I want. You don't have power to protect you from you." Thompson asks the ladies and grooms a few key questions about their relationship before "allowing" them to be married. It comes across as a humorous, political correctness about who has the right to tell people in love what they can or can't do. "I never thought of it that way," says Thompson. "I just wanted to wear wings." The networks, though, said no wings. It was all about

The two couples involved in the series are determined to put a recognizable human face on the issue. Debbie Parent and Naldo Mackenzie, a Toronto couple, have both been



Thompson, with fiancée (left), and Naldo Mackenzie

our relationship works," says Parent. "They knew this was a huge milestone for us."

Dan Durbin, a high school drama teacher, and Michael Berkman, an advertising exec, thought they'd have to get married in Holland. When the couple got engaged—while both at Queen's University—same-sex marriage wasn't legal. "We began trying in a world where marriage is the institution if you want to spend the rest of your life with someone," says Berkman, 23. "And we felt we had every right to be a part of that institution." In 2003, the laws in Ontario came around to that way of thinking—as did their families. When he told about the plan for a celestial ceremony, Durbin's step grandfather said, "I think this is terrible. You're putting a target on yourself and it's a bad move for your career." After Durbin pointed out, "You're not calling to me to marry," his grandfather replied, "Well, I wouldn't mind."

Before the show, Thompson says, he felt ambivalent about gay marriage. "I didn't get it." When I came out, it was about staying alive, just being accepted and loved—marriage was unthinkable to me." But now, after shedding a few wedding tears, he's fully on board, fairy-dust in hand. ■



FLORENCE ON FIRE

A National Gallery show focuses on a pinnacle of Renaissance creativity

THE WORLD MAY NEVER have seen such a concentration of artistic genius as Florence played host to in the early 1500s. Local heroes Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo were back in town after sojourns working elsewhere. The Roman prodigy Raphael settled in for a key formative period, from 1504 to 1508. Dozens of his famous painters and sculptors would try to rise to the masters' challenges. But after a few short decades, this great blaze of genius would flicker out, through the centuries long worth of making sense of what it all meant will continue. This year, visitors to Ottawa will get to consider the remarkable

output of the Tuscan city's glory days in a new light, in the National Gallery of Canada's major blockbuster *Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and the Renaissance in Florence*.

The show (May 29 to Sept. 3) amounts to a sweeping statement by David Franklin, the gallery's chief curator—a bid to put its own stamp on how perhaps the most famed era in art history should be understood. "One of the platforms for my selection and curatorial was that I could do a show," says the soft-spoken Franklin, 44, who got his job in 2001. "Or try to do that show." Pulling it off was, if nothing else, a nightmarish feat of networking. Franklin has spent much of his career based in England and doing field research in Italy, and he tapped his European

art-establishment contacts to persuade leading museums to lend great drawings like Michelangelo's *Three Lovers* of *Hercules and Leda* and *Leonardo and the Swan*, along with big, eye-catching paintings like Leonardo's *Allegory of the Creation and Fall of Man*. But the hunt for museum-goers is the name in the show's title, Franklin hopes they'll come away with a deeper understanding of what transpired in Florence in the first half of the 1500s. His aim is not just to show off great art, but to explain how an unprecedented explosion of creativity ended with the triumph of a more superficial style. Franklin has spent much of his career based in England and doing field research in Italy, and he tapped his European

art history is already well known among art

historians for his provocative take on the turning point in art. His 2001 book, *Painting in Renaissance Florence, 1500-1550*, challenged the traditional way of looking at the period, which groups together most of Leonardo's work, along with Michelangelo's up to about 1530, under the label High Renaissance. The more eccentric style that followed, Mannerism, is often viewed as a separate, lesser period that Franklin tries to trace this dividing line. He sees Leonardo and Michelangelo as united in spirit with the Mannerists they inspired, such as Pontormo and Rossi, in a Florentine tradition. In his view, they all shared a passion for drawing, especially human figures, and valued the process of making art as much as the finished product. Against these sturdy Florentines, Franklin sets a competing, bitter idea of what art should be, a school inspired by Raphael's more decorous Roman style.

Franklin is no impartial referee between these rival camps. He sees the nadir of Florence's passionate style by Raphael's influence as a disaster. And his version of



the story features a slick villain. He accuses painter, architect and writer Giorgio Vasari with always single-handedly snuffing out the creative flames lit by Leonardo and Michelangelo. Vasari was one of Florence's record-setters, but a surprisingly pursue author. His 1550 book *Life of the Artists* idealized Michelangelo, yet also helped to give a new direction for painting—with Raphael as its beacon. "Vasari beheads the Florentine tradition and its belief in the creative process," Franklin says. "He gives the power to the patron and the public rather than to the artists themselves." The result, Franklin contends, was a shift to the "yogic" of "��" (��), decorative paintings delivered on time to satisfy patrons, rather than expressing the soul of an artist.

This summer's show takes the argument from Franklin's book and hangs it on the gallery's walls. That he's been able to assemble enough Renaissance art to tell the story



is a major coup. He spent a lot of time in his beloved Italy and even learned an Italian translator he met when he needed help preparing a lecture in Florence. ("They move in Ottawa's upscale Glebe neighbourhood, and have two young sons," he found Ottawa wonderful, but became disillusioned with the general tone of academic art history. "You can't talk about genius, you can only talk about polarized areas of gender and class and race," he says. So he joined the National Gallery as curator of prints and drawings in 1998.)

All this study, all that writing, all that travelling in what Italy, past and present, has to offer—it culminates in this show. Yet when asked about the stakes, both for him and his gallery, Franklin's always been concerned about whether his perceived win was art, or whether the crowds will show up. "It's pretty bloody minded about it," he declares, sounding for a moment less like a polar Canadian than like one of these passionate Renaissance dealers of patrons and critics, whose spirit and irony he's trying to bring alive again. ■

ON THE WEB For a listing of major gallery and museum exhibits taking place across the country this summer, visit www.nationalgalleries.ca/summer2005.html

CRAPSHOOT AT CANNES

Two top Canuck directors go for broke on the Riviera



TWO MIDNIGHT SCENES FROM CANNES:

1. The jockeye of *A History of Violence*, Canadian David Cronenberg's Hollywood-financed thriller. The audience has been on its feet, clapping and cheering, for five minutes. Cronenberg blows them kisses with arms outstretched. He hugs his stars, Viggo Mortensen, Maura Bellu and William Hurt, while his wife, Carolyn, working with a professional camera, captures it all on video. Finally, Cronenberg gives her a passionate on-camera kiss. Then, taking the camera, he holds it aloft in a triumphal salute and executes a slow pan around the room, like a rock star offering up the microphone to the crowd. Barker he has turned tables on photographers by shooting back with his own *Nikon*. That the idea of filming his own standing ovation, he swears, was unpremeditated: "I was examining out of things to do," he says. "At that point, I would have done backflip if could."

2. A palatial villa in the hills, where a lavish party hosted by *Breakfast in Canada* is in full swing. Below the terrace is a pool with a bronze statue of a horse clutching one of the water and a pair of live swans gliding through the reflected flames of fireflies. Surveying the surreal spectacle, a couple of Canadian filmmakers mutter disapproving: "Selkirk is financing a party with money that could go to film." The gauge of honour is director Atom Egoyan, who has just premiered *Where the Truth Lies*. He received a warm ovation but mixed reviews. And with U.S. distribution news that the score cannot could incur an R-17 rating, there's concern his movie—the biggest of his career—won't get the wide release it needs. "I'd want to keep making films at this level," says Egoyan, "this one has to do well."

EGOYAN AND CRONENBERG. People tend to confide them, as if they're two sides of a split personality. Atom Egoyan, that mild-mannered auteur who likes to run Toronto and is known for making edgy, chilly movies about tinfoil subjects. Atom Cronenberg, the last picture, a labyrinthine odyssey of identity and loss, pushed at the box office. Now he's made a more commercial movie with American characters, and some nasty sex.



and why will hate you for being commercial?"

There are many parallels between their pictures. *A History of Violence* and *Where the Truth Lies* both rework traditional genres, the thriller and the mystery. Set in the U.S., they focus on morally mucky links to violence and the Mob. And they contain an implicit critique of the malaise lurking beneath the sentimental glow of the American Dream. Incidentally, they also both feature scenes of canning.

But the two directors have often opposite approaches to mainstream entertain. As usual, Egoyan refuses to tell a straight story.

Based on the novel by Rupert Holmes, *Where the Truth Lies* is about a journalist (Alfred Molina) probing the mysterious breakup of a famous comedy duo, superbly played by Colin Firth and Kevin Spacey. (The novel is loosely based on the lives of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis.) Shifting between the '50s and '70s, this opulent period piece glances with style. But while it's about Hollywood, it's not of Hollywood. Set in Los Angeles, Toronto and London, it's a \$30-million Canadian-U.S.-U.K. co-production with a perfunctory plot as complex as its financing. *A History of Violence*, on the other hand,

Cronenberg and Egoyan, whose last movies, *Incendies*, offer new twists with greater appeal

is a \$40-million production financed by New Line Cinema. In the U.S., and that's it, in Canada. Based on a graphic novel, this noir thriller is Cronenberg's most straightforward and accessible movie since *The Fly* (1986). And like *The Fly*, it was a job for him. The story plays like a race western. Violence erupts on tinfoil in Little Indiana town when some men in black, masquerade from Philip, come gunning for Tom (Viggo Mortensen), who owns the local diner. And to the cus-

sotomies of his wife and son, Tom reveals a ruthless talent for self-defense.

Tom could be Cronenberg himself: a nice guy living in a small town called Canada, surviving the tedium, or else, of art house cinema. Mean black, the Hollywoodists, ask him to show his stuff, to direct some goryfication. And he delivers. With bursts of visceral horror, the film bears Cronenberg's signature. But as the hero subdues his dark side in a rough scene of marital sex on the stairs, that's a departure from exploring the erotic side of car crashes.

Even in its darkest moments, there's an

uncharacteristic tenderness to this story of a family coming unglued. For once Cronenberg is working with more or less clear actors, and a tragicomic sense that speaks to the heart. Even his villains have a Sopranos-like charm—the mother played by a scowling Ed Harris and a priceless William Hurt. And some of the action sequences are so exhilarating they draw spontaneous applause at Cannes—shouting a blood bath from the audience that conspicuously runs right through the film's otherwise quiet moments later in the film.

Once again, Cronenberg has managed to shock Cannes—this time by making a crowd-pleaser. "It's perhaps a little made of shock left to me," he jokes. "It could be very addictive—the wave of love and affection. But if people say Cronenberg did this movie because he desperately needs a hit, they don't know what they're talking about." The director admits, however, that he needed the money. After deferring his salary on *Spider*, and earning virtually nothing for two years, he was grateful for a Hollywood paycheque.

Robert Lantos, who executive-produced Cronenberg's *Crash*, tells me he declined to get involved in *Spider* because "I knew that the film, no matter how bravely executed, had no chance of reaching a substantial audience." Instead, he produced Egoyan's off-the-radar *Anatomie*. Now Lantos is backing Egoyan as producer of *Where the Truth Lies*, which cost twice as much as *Anatomie*. "We all make mistakes," says Lantos, "and I make lots of mistakes. I don't know if *Where the Truth Lies* is going to be successful. I do know it's going to be marketed with a sense of daring and enthusiasm all over the world."

The next day, however, I talked to Egoyan, who was worried that U.S. distributors holding the film were reluctant to give it the push it needs. "We're dealing with nervous executives used to making a one-kind-of-every-film movie. We're saying, 'Why don't you give it a campaign?' We've shown it in L.A. and we're realizing that young men love the movie because it is kind of cool, it's a mystery, and it has sex. I'm not trying to be cynical with this. I'm the guy, after all, who told *Mystic River* not to market *Requiem* as a sex thriller. I used to think artistic stamp of approval would be enough to find a market, that's not true."

Egoyan is up against some high stakes. His biggest box office hit has been *Requiem* and

The Sweet Hereafter, which earned back after modest budgets with North American grosses in the neighborhood of \$5 million. While *Truth Lies* needs to earn over 10 times that, with less money than Cronenberg, Egoyan has attempted a more complex film, fraught with more intimate agendas. Cronenberg excoriates American violence from the inside, with a smoky/bleak drama that can both ways, Egoyan excoriates American callousness from a Canadian remove.

"We observe the Dream Factory from a privileged position," says Egoyan, as we sit on a hotel patio in Cannes, talking over

lunch why the theme keeps resurfacing, and then wonder if his conundrum is a product of Cannes fatigue. "I have to deal with this," he sighs. "I have to take a break, artistically. You don't want that to become a cliché. Maybe the only way to break that is to use someone else's screenplay. In that way I'm really jealous of what David has been able to do. He found a screenplay he could make his own to, and tell stories that he does."

Yet Egoyan says he can't imagine returning to directing control of a film in a studio—"especially now that any executive can take the DVD that you send them of your movie,



Left to right: Phoenix, Egoyan and Norton were a warm addition for *Spider*, but not without misgivings.

the shrills of fans behind barriers who have just seen William Defoe emerge from a car."

"We understand it completely but we don't have that rhythm. Adrenalin does not flow through our blood the same way. We're an infinitely more reflective culture." And Egoyan knows well like a mirror ball. As Lantos points out, "I don't think Ascan has it in his DNA to tell a straightforward story."

Egoyan has added a slip knot to the novel's storyline—flashbacks to Lohman's character as a 12-year-old girl, falling in love with Bonsu's character as a polo player. Lohman, a refreshingly young-looking 18-year-old, actually plays the child. And with that addition, *Where the Truth Lies* becomes yet another Egoyan movie—after *Requiem*, *The Sweet Hereafter* and *Felicity*—Journey— involving a girl possessed by an older man

laid into the composite, get some info to rearrange some scenes, and turn it back and say, 'Look at that, I was just feeling around, what do you think?' I would just shrug my shoulders."

Cronenberg, meanwhile, maintains that he made *A History of Violence* with no interference. But then he can't seem making commercial movies, and has directed two previous studio pictures, *The Fly* and *The Devil Zone*. If *A History of Violence* is a hit, that will just give him freedom to do more of what made him notorious. In Cannes, Lantos speaks about producing Cronenberg's next movie. It's a sci-fi picture called *Parable*, set in an uncharmed future in which pain is a luxury. On the surface overflowing the screens and berlins, Lantos will have it involves scenes of characters using their internal organs to have sex.

"That's magical sex?" I ask.
"Yeah, something like that."
"Sounds perfect for Cannes."

DAVID CRONENBERG'S *A History of Violence* is a film about brutality reflecting an adolescent Indian town when mobsters from Philly come gunning for Ron, who runs the local diner—and then, to the consternation of his wife and son, results in violence for self-defence. While awaiting the arrival of Cannes, Cronenberg took some candid photographs for *Maclean's*.



Clockwise from top left: Phoenix, Mortensen, Mortensen, Bellucci-Jonciet, Mortensen (right), Hurt, Bellucci. **Bottom:** Cronenberg; Cannes preparation. The director, who shocked Cannes by making a crowd-pleaser, says "the wave of love and affection" could be "very addictive."



GOING SPOUSAL IN CANNES

Being 'wife of' at the French film festival affords certain advantages

AT MOST FUNCTIONS, playing *Wife Of* can be a mildly demeaning role, or at least a boring one. But going spousal at the Cannes Film Festival—where many of the movies I am considerably had *marriage* as their theme—turns out to be a rather French role, with a quip and lingering cache. It's not a walk-on, either. It even comes with its own covered badge, the luminous pass I went around my neck to identify myself as the official accompaniment of my journalist husband.

You don't want to actually work the festival, trust me. I did that one year. Being one

of 4,000 journalists all pursuing the same very requires a weird sort of amnesia; you spend your days running between films, gaveling before security guards, or weeping over faulty Internet connections. You understand, you barge and purge no names until your eyes feel like melting wheels of full-fat cheese, and, always, you feel the stinging shame of not being Julie's blonde. Cannes is a place where star power trumps everything.

But as an *Official Spouse*, I am able to sweep past lapses of repose. Soberness, when a guard checks my pass, actually gives it a little heft and mirth: d'soleil in his umbrella the cushion to let me sit. Such spousal moments are rare. On my final day, I went into the Palais (of red carpet fame) and saw a sign for the WiFi Cafe. How nice, I thought, a special spousal refuge, the "Wifey lounge." But it turned out to be a press centre for making more last connections. I wish there was a wifey lounge, in fact, because my husband is the company

My husband is on the run from dawn to midnight. My agenda, on the other hand, includes gazing into lingerie stores, wondering why all French bras cost \$200. I

"MY HUSBAND is on the run from dawn to midnight. My agenda, on the other hand, includes gazing into lingerie stores, wondering why all French bras cost \$200."

Visitors, combined those extremes: they were imperious patients of matings, with an gloriously high body count. And Cronenberg's film poses the always-pertinent question: can the person you deeply love be a total stranger at the same time?

Back in the hotel room, our own marital conversations are carried

"It's not that hard. Just click on the image badge, then click on explore, then enter your user name, then the password—the French one, not the old one—then wait until the stamped things stops resolving, then click on preferences..."

Or "I saw Maru Dillon today in that movie about Charles Bronfman, by that Norwegian guy, Bent Hamer. Were you there? I thought I saw you up in the balcony."

"No, I saw that Argentine one instead." "Maru Dillon's gained weight. He was good."

"Did I sleep more, but I think I had it?" "The guy I ate beside really cracked."

"On a hot day, you should always sit by side and in front, women, they're usually closer."

Our bedtimes rituals in Cannes are also strange. My husband brought five electronic devices, including a high-definition video camera. So every night, the ordered in an intensive care unit, we must plug in and care for our electronic brood—plugging them in cradles, making them "sleep," and recharging their batteries. Then we prepare for sleep ourselves, another acquired Cannes skill. Our head follows the stars from the bar where festival-goers traditionally gather, spilling out into the street and drinking until 5 a.m. It seems like heavy surf, with spot rates of screaming. This means that despite the soft Prosecco, we must close the shutters, draw the shades and ensure our industrial strength earplugs. Then we lie in bed, surrounded by the pulsing red and green lights of various things powering up—our own electronic wacky day.

But every year, like magic itself, Cannes achieves a certain measure when you least expect it. One evening, we step out onto our balcony with glasses of rosé. We can just glimpse the Mediterranean, wearing a ring of lights from the yachts in the bay. Then we look down—and see that our rafting—covered by a game ad for the new *Wim Wenders* movie, *Die Gute Kusche*. It stars Jessica Lange and her partner, Sam Shepard. Another spousal moment, where love meets weird, a Cannes

“It's not that hard. Just click on the image badge, then click on explore, then enter your user name, then the password—the French one, not the old one—then wait until the stamped things stops resolving, then click on preferences..."

Private author and journalist Marini Jackson is married to Michael's film critic Brian D. Johnson

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BACK TALK



TV | Who you gonna call?
George Michael Bluth

The 34-year-old star of *Arrested Development* over a lot to ghosts.

Looking out the window of his parents' suburban home in Brampton, Ont., Michael Cera notices that the McLeans' photographer is setting up a massive light in the middle of the lawn and memorizes the movie word for word: *Will Hunting* had a lot to do with me wanting to be an actor," says Cera, who's many families in the cast have no doubt that their 10-year-old neighbour plays the awkward George Michael Bluth on Fox TV's just-renewed *Arrested Development*. After all, the numbers say that not that many people are watching.

But these who are know that Cera's

deft comic timing is nearly unmatched—check it up to a scene of chicken pox at age 4: "I watched *Ghostbusters* every day when I was sick and memorized the movie word for word: *Will Hunting* had a lot to do with me wanting to be an actor," says Cera, who's a picture of himself and his co-stars on stage at the Emmys accepting the award for best comedy show. *But back in Brampton* he's just as average McD. "Michael," says his mom, "did you hear that you still have *Ghostbusters* sheets on your bed?" —SHANDRA DIAZ

There's no accounting about how bad that last episode. He was in *Arrested Development*—an adult in *Arrested Development*—and he signed Cera when he left.



A theme this deadly serious can sometimes be laughable—there's a lot of overacting, cheap dialogue. Rived suspense and bad consequences make. But it's compelling to watch. **SARS** opened across the city from an elevator to a hospital waiting room to a school or a church. And the human factor makes good TV: doctors too stoic to admit that it might be something they can't figure out, people who refuse to be caged and, politicians who put a city's economic state above saving lives. And by the end it's not entirely convincing that anyone will be more prepared next time around. —S.D.

PHOTOGRAPH BY L. J. MURKIN COURTESY OF FOX

TV | SARS: long gone but not forgotten

SARS seems like a distant memory, a disease that's disappeared—there hasn't been a single case reported in 2005, but it all comes rushing back while watching the TV movie. *Plague: Goh-SARS in Toronto* (CTV, May 26). The doomsday re-enactment of how severe acute respiratory syndrome was from China to Hong Kong to Toronto (not to mention many other places around the world) during the spring of 2003 is meant to be both entertain and a do warning that the disease, which took 44 lives here, is only a dress rehearsal for something much worse down the road.

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MACLEAN'S 100

ROGERS
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BACKTALK

Film | Little feet don't fail them now

How's the time to review in these stupid situations you've always dreamt of? Well, about to be faced with a sort of reality show-esque, and that will be the first things to suffer. For in auditioning for an American Adichens... (yep, Adichens, bound to prove that this isn't a mild description of the U.S. ABC), an otherwise kind, if pained off the likes of model Kristen Wiig, former *How I Met Your Mother* star Cobie Smulders and Jennifer Holmfield for a balloon-faced kid in *Disney's Wish* (the *Stone Face* 13), but there's nothing worse than interviewing an actor, no matter how big.

That's why *Adichens* follows a dream of a by itself lameassure Monica Agapito and Amy Sedaris, as wellheaded, these sweet, the sweetly, hypocritical companions of *Strictly Ballroom* fame—mostly because they're 13 years old. Agapito and Sedaris take on three 3-bucketeers from three New York City schools—one in



Adichens
New York
City schools
have to hold
in about
a billion

Adichens is a film about a poor, down-on-their-luck neighborhood, and the last but working-class family... they're the only ones in school city-wide in the London Town Matches. The kids are positively cherries, whether they're also step-hows or if you think these dance

skills is record life, or when the uninterested boys are particularly glibtastic their height. *Adichens* features... *uh*... look-alikes who wouldn't grab top-bunny for her kids, minus competitiveness that can be... Spineless, this she's not spelling her coordinates, or the previous connoisseurs, but *Adichens* is working together and others insight into their social hierarchy, the filmmakers encapsulate this in-between age, where a cheery-voiced matron is both innocent and awkward. And by movie's-end, the kids have built up their confidence so they work out their own pretty doing a shoe-shine shenanigan.

—KAREN HANLEY



John Prine | Do's and don'ts of the road

John Prine took nine years off between his last album of original material and the recently released, critically acclaimed *For a Square* (that's been best—the shrimp-swingin' water had two songs, succumbin' to a neck cancer and continued touring year-round. The 58-year-old Nashville resident told *Maclean's*

these doable/lessons for life on the road:

THE LOTS OF CLOTHES

"I'm not a real fashion hog type person, I just don't figure out what I'm going to wear. If I'm going for six days, I'll take 27 pairs of socks. I can't make up my mind on things like packing clothes."

I SLEEP IN "When I'm not home, I get up at 6:15 a.m. and take the boys to school and stuff. Now when I get on the road, I sleep until 11 and my whole day turns around."

BE CAREFUL, WHAT FOOD YOU EAT FOR "When I had a rockin' rail-based, we had shrimp on the con-fried ricer. In Texas, they bought us a garbage pail. I filled it full of ice and hundreds of shrimp. By the time we got them, the ice had melted, so we had a garbage pail full of warm water with smelly shrimp floating around. That taught me a lesson. Another tour I had nothing but meat loaf. I should have collected some of them for a meat loaf museum."

MACLEAN'S 100 | TOP 10

Highly recommended for your summer reading list

Anna Porter, now winding down a career as one of the country's best-known literary publishers, lists her favorite Canadian books (in a particular order):

A Year of God, Margaret Laurence
Grey and Gruke, Margaret Atwood
The Danger Tree, David MacLean
Sammy's Horse, Margaret Richter
The Dairy-Rim, Lois Pacey
The Minotaur, Josef Skvorecky
Kath the Queen, Robertson Davies
The Twilling of Lora, Timothy Findley
Running in the Family, Michael Ondrejka
The Curse for Death by Lightning,
Gill Anand's *Bengali*





THE SEPARATIST BOGEYMAN

Our fear-mongering leaders should show a little faith in this country.

WHEN PAUL MARTIN visited Chuck Cadman last week to nail down the independent NDP's support in the big confidence vote, the centerpiece of the Prime Minister's argument was that Canada's national unity would be in peril if the Conservatives and Bloc Québécois defeated the government.

Stephen Harper, for his part, has repeatedly argued that re-electing a corrupt Liberal government would rekindle separation in Quebec—and in Alberta. Bob Mills, the Conservative MP for Red Deer, said his constituents are talking about taking Alberta out of

Canada if Canada won't take the Liberals out of power.

It's getting hard to tell who's really behind which segment—or since apparently everyone is—who gets to be on top. If you can't manage to believe both parts, then voting for either one will push the country to the brink. Apparently the best reason for avoiding an election—not just this spring, but ever—is that Canada can no longer survive one. You'd think our national leaders would be a bit embarrassed by the state of affairs.

Iain's next article researches the fan of these competing claims of national security. They're widely and reasonably held, not only by the Liberal and Conservative leadership but by many of their supporters. It would really help, though, if Martin and Harper would lay off and tell their parties to do the same. It's appalling behaviour to brand your opponent a threat to the nation. But since this country has seen more than its share of appalling behaviour from its MP's lately, that probably isn't reason enough. The better reason is that talk of separating church can so easily turn into self-delighting gobbledygook.

You'd think Martin, in particular, would have figured that out by now. He was part of the March gang in 1990 who moved so lightly from supporting the March Lake accord as a useful improvement to a decent Constitution to arguing, for weeks on end and in full roar, that Meech's failure would put the separation in the cardbox seat. When Jim Chrétien, stillified as Meech's designate,

Because Liberal leader, Marion supporters wore black armbands.

join Bellatrix. Menzies' finding—somehow stereotyping your feet doesn't actually give you what you want—was it wasn't exactly very hard to defend Canada after reading Menzies' condition of his survival. Statistically, it's irresponsible to sue Harper in a national unity threat when Blatner might yet become prime minister.

"The other day I interviewed Stephane Dion, who used to work pretty hard in the mission-unity side of things. He said something I wish every MP would think about: 'Ergo, hypothetically, the Liberals are no longer in power, the country will be governed on the right. It's not a good choice.'

¹ distinction should be made between

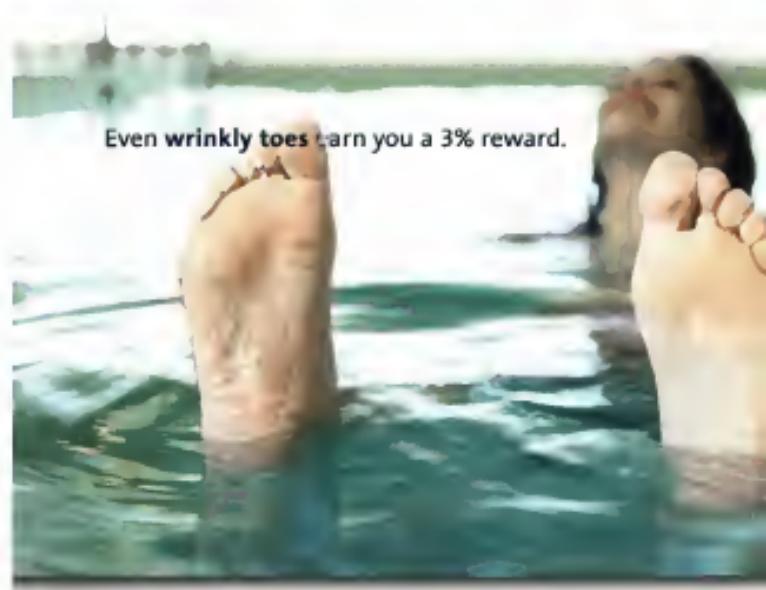
We should be so lucky. Nor is Maritain in his harmony of function with a man who defers to his wife's decisions down to a matter. When Stephen Day's Canadian Alliance lost the 2000 election, Harper blamed Canada, or those bits of Canada that had the poor taste to be located outside Alberta. He versioned his diagnosis with the "very dramatic" Reform movement "had twisted itself into a greeting to place. He said Alberta had "let a will" in Canada and needed to build "a stronger and more courageous Alberta. It is time to look at Quebec and to learn."

Harper does respect Quebec-style separation but only provisionally. "Separation would become a real issue the day the federal government decides to make it one." The days he's been singing the same tune, "anybody in the rest of the country sends a signal that they are prepared to tolerate corruption, they are, quite frankly, enabling the failure of the country," he said, other day in Calgary.

The survival of Mulroney's government gave his leaders time to think about what they were doing. They could start by going through some score-keeping. It's stronger than it looks. The *Hot eight* might go on in Quebec, but, before, in 1993 and 2004, Canada survived. The government might have few supporters in Quebec. Alberta has been lost with that fate for a decade. Don't assume Quebecers would have thrown us out. In 1997, a lot of my colleagues were sure Quebec would leave if *Confidence* replaced the *Yes* as the official Opposition. Now the voices seem absent.

Canadians traditionally don't take election results as a cue to give up on Canada. I wonder why our politicians wish we would. If our leaders could show some faith in our country, the country might regain its faith in its leaders.

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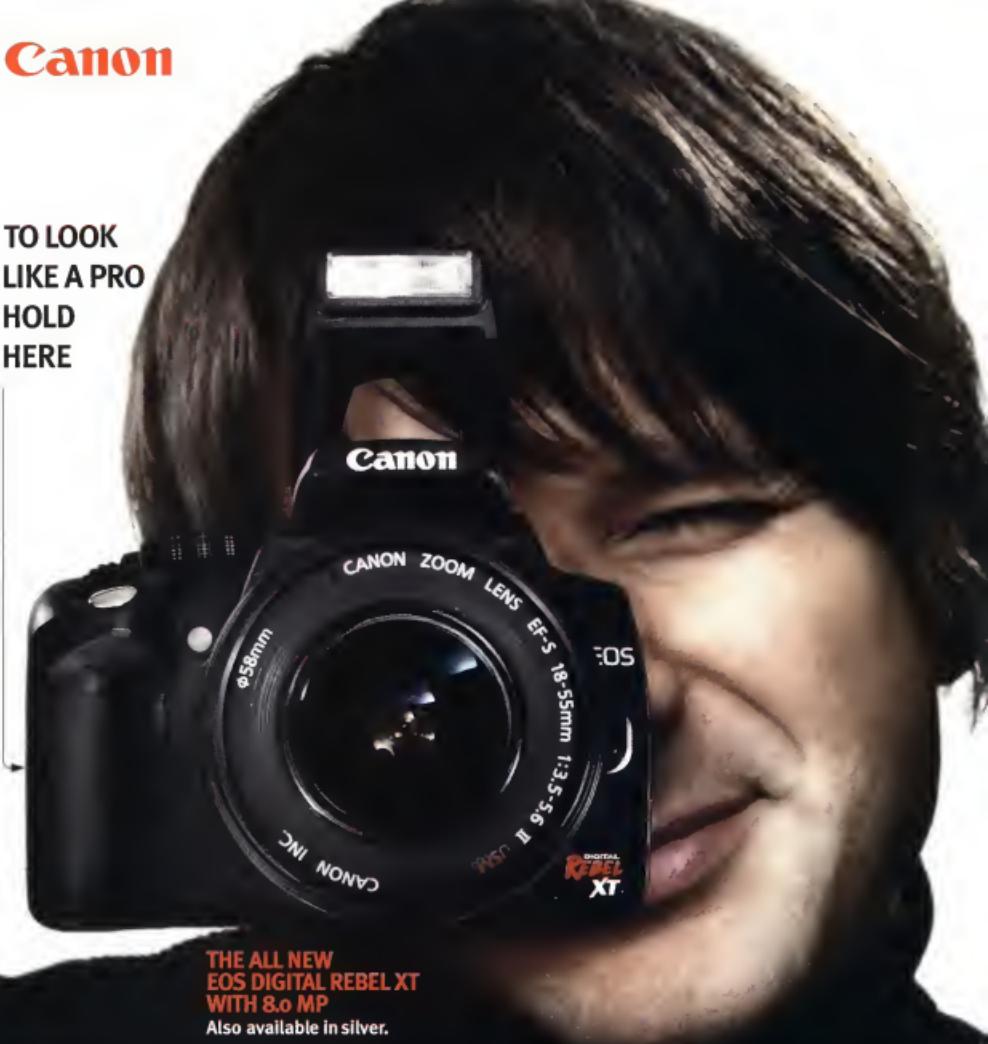
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